The Wooing of the Rose and other Poems

Lucius Harwood Foote

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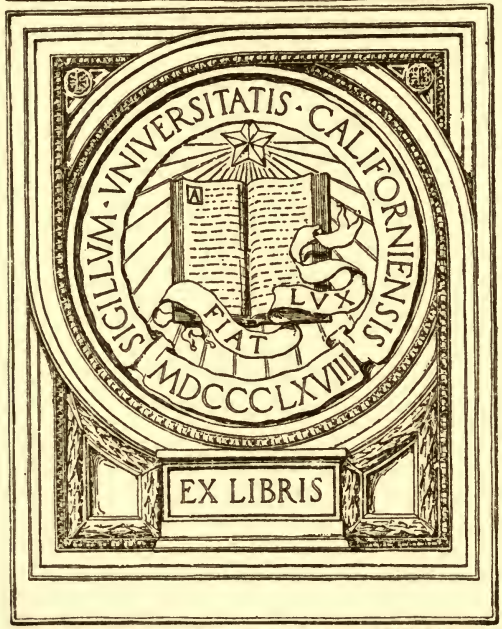

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THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

AND OTHER POEMS

BY

LUCIUS HARWOOD FOOTE

PRESENTED BY
RAPHAEL WEILL
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UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

SOMETHING more than the lilt of the strain,
Something more than the touch of the lute;
For the voice of the minstrel is vain,
If the heart of the minstrel is mute.

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THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

A WHITE rose bloomed in a garden close,
On a tristful autumn day;
Sad was the heart of the fair white rose
As the summer slipped away.

She had been wooed by the singing bird,
The bee and the butterfly;
But never a cord of her heart was stirred,
Till she heard the west wind sigh.

She leaned on the trellis, fair and sweet,
With the laughing leaves above,
As he glided in with his noiseless feet
And whispered his tales of love.

A rollicking, restless rover, he,
The waif of the salt-sea brine,
And only a white, white rose was she,
The last of her royal line.

He kissed the lips of the rose in bloom,
And alas, a-lack a-day!
She was despoiled of her rare perfume,
For the wind will have its way.

FOUR SCORE YEARS AND TEN

FROM that far distant goal he seems to cast
His patient eyes across the vanished years;
Life's turmoil, with its triumphs and its tears,
Is now a part of that relentless past.
The eager feet which erstwhile sped so fast,
Urged ever onward by his hopes and fears,
Have reached the utmost verge of life at last,
Where that grim warder of the grave appears.
Firm in the faith that all is for the best,
Like some spent toiler he would take his rest.
For good or ill his little work is done;
Far from the silver radiance of the dawn,
The fervid heat and flame of noon are gone;
He only waits the setting of the sun.

CALIFORNIA

IN all methinks I see the counterpart
Of Italy, without her dower of art.
We have the lordly Alps, the fir-fringed hills,
The green and golden valleys veined with rills,
A dead Vesuvius with its smoldering fire,
  A tawny Tiber sweeping to the sea.
Our seasons have the same superb attire,
  The same redundant wealth of flower and tree,
Upon our peaks the same imperial dyes,
  And day by day, serenely over all,
The same successive months of smiling skies.
  Conceive a cross, a tower, a convent wall,
A broken column and a fallen fane,
A chain of crumbling arches down the plain
  A group of brown-faced children by a stream,
A scarlet-skirted maiden standing near,
A monk, a beggar, and a muleteer,
  And lo! it is no longer now a dream.
These are the Alps, and there the Apennines;
  The fertile plains of Lombardy between;
Beyond Val d'Arno with its flocks and vines,
These granite crags are gray monastic shrines

THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

Perched on the cliffs like old dismantled forts;
And far to seaward can be dimly seen
The marble splendor of Venetian courts;
While one can all but hear the mournful
rhythmic beat
Of white-lipped waves along the sea-paved
street.
O childless mother of dead empires, we,
The latest born of all the western lands,
In fancied kinship stretch our infant hands
Across the intervening seas to thee.
Thine the immortal twilight, ours the dawn,
Yet we shall have our names to canonize,
Our past to haunt us with its solemn eyes,
Our ruins, when this restless age is gone.

TYPES

THE new and the old,
The dross and the gold,
The chaff and the wheat
Commingle and meet
Here, where the banners of sunset are furled
On the rim of the world.
New forms and new faces
Confront the old races
And challenge the scions of Saxon descent.
Such a wonder to-day,
On the crowded highway,
Flashed on my sight for a moment and went.
Like the Goddess of Dawn,
With the step of a fawn,
And lithe as a leopard, she passed, and was gone.
Her sire is a Celt, and her mother was born
Where the bountiful light of a Tuscan morn
Falls on the billows of ripened corn.
Escutcheons are nothing to her, although
One ancestor fought under Cæsar in Gaul,
And another went down by the bastion-wall
When Sidney, at Zutphen, was slain by the foe.

THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

Though her marvellous face, with its halo of hair,
Is so hauntingly fair,
There's a smouldering fire which flickers and flashes
Beneath her lashes,
And the ghost of an old Patrician disdain,
Like the phantom of pain,
Is lurking now
In the swell of her nostril and shade of her brow.
In fine,
There is pride and passion in every line,
From her finger tips
To the arch of her foot and the curve of her lips.
Men have gone to their death for women like this,
And counted it bliss.
In the hush of her chamber, this very night,
She will tell her beads in the chastened light,
And pray to the Mother of God to keep
Her soul in sleep.
Ah me,
Both saint and sinner is she—
But who can tell what the end will be?

DON JUAN

DON JUAN has ever the grand old air,
As he greets me with courtly grace;
Like a crown of glory the snow-white hair
That halos his swarthy face;
And he says, with a courtesy rare and fine,
As he ushers me in at the door:
"Panchita mia will bring us the wine,
And the casa is yours, señor."
His fourscore years have a tranquil cast,
For Time has tempered his heart and hand;
Though the seething tide of his blood ran fast
When he ruled like a lord in the land.
In the wild rodeo and mad stampede
He rode, I am told,
In the days of old
With his brown vaqueros at headlong speed.
From the Toro Peaks to the Carmel Pass
His cattle fed on rich, wild grass;
And far to the west
Where the sand-dunes rest
On the rim of the heaving sea,
From the Point of Pines to the river's mouth,
From the Gabilan Hills to the bay on the south,

THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

He held the land in fee.
It was never the same
When the Gringos came,
With their lust of gold and their greed of gain;
And his humble cot
With its garden plot
Is all that is left of his wide domain.
But he says, with a courtesy rare and fine,
As he ushers me in at the door:
"Panchita mia will bring us the wine,
And the casa is yours, señor."

A REVERIE

I

TURN back with me across the dim historic years,
And pass the portals of the dark mysterious door,
Where pale-faced Sorrow sits beside the cairn in tears;
Behold, the spectre of Imperial lust appears,
Its fleshless hands are red with human gore.

II

Around this sombre silhouette softly plays
The mellow lustre of Castilian days.

On the long, low swell of the sleeping sea
At anchor a galleon swings at her chain;
On the strand a knight, on his bended knee—
In the sovereign name of Catholic Spain—
Unfurls a standard loyally.
Scarred veterans of elder lands,
Their banners red and red their hands,
File rank on rank across the sands.
So fair a sight was never seen,

Broad valleys bound in gold and green,
While stately rivers sweep between.

III

The pageant vanishes; and in its place
A band of friars, in procession, climb
The consecrated hill, with solemn face,
And plant the emblem of their faith sublime.
Where now they kneel upon the roofless sod
Anon in minster walls they worship God.
Adown the summer silence I can hear
The silver chime of bells ring sweet and clear;
I see the vaulted nave, the surpliced priest,
The wine, the wafer, and the solemn feast,
The altar and the silvern candlesticks,
The carven Christ, the gilded crucifix,
The cups of beaten gold for sacred rites,
The smoking censor and the waxen lights,
The sculptured saints, the dusky neophytes.

IV

Time slowly weaves the web of fate,
Dynasties rise and fall;
And surely, soon or late,
Death comes to all.

Alike, beneath the sable pall,
The monarch and the monk lie down.
And so, his work of love and faith complete,
We see the good man calmly meet
The angel with the golden crown.

And while, methinks, I hear their sweet refrains
On every ripple of the ambient air,
The grass is growing in their fallen fanes,
Their silver chimes no longer call to prayer.

V

'Tis an o'er true tale in the young New World,
Since that belted knight his banner unfurled,
His cross in the air, his keel on the main,
There's strife on the sea and toil on the plain,
For the white man's blood is the red man's bane.
Bronze statues of the mystic past,
I mark your slowly wasting lines,
Too crude in civic chains to last,
For you no promised morrow shines;
Victims of lawlessness and lust,
The end is certain, "dust to dust."

VI

The years glide onward with noiseless feet,
And the mystical seasons wax and wane,
Only prolonged by the summer's heat,
Only defined by the winter's rain.
Before me stretches a pastoral land,
Where the patriarch pitches his tent by the rills;
His corn land and vine land on either hand,
And his flocks and his herds on a hundred hills.
When the hampers are filled with the fruit of the vine,
And the sheaves of the reaper are garnered in,
Red from the wine-press flow rivers of wine,
And the feasts of the autumn begin.
The young men laugh loud at their festive games,
And the old men rejoice at the sight;
While the dark-eyed daughters of dark-browed dames
Sing plaintive songs in the dusk of the night.

O nights of rest, O days of ease,
In this the Garden of Hesperides,
Here life is one long summer day,
  A day that never reaches noon;
Where smiling May is always May,
  And roses bloom from June to June.

EL VAQUERO

TINGED with the blood of Aztec lands,
Sphinx-like, the tawny herdsman stands,
A coiled reata in his hands.
  Devoid of hope, devoid of fear,
  Half brigand, and half cavalier—
This helot, with imperial grace,
Wears ever on his tawny face
  A sad, defiant look of pain.
Left by the fierce iconoclast,
A living fragment of the past—
  Greek of the Greeks he must remain.

DAWN ON MOUNT TAMALPAIS

A CLOUDLESS heaven is bending o'er us,
The dawn is lighting the linn and lea;
Island and headland and bay before us,
And dim in the distance the heaving sea.

The Farallon light is faintly flashing
The birds are wheeling in fitful flocks,
The coast-line brightens, the waves are dashing
And tossing their spray on the Lobos rocks.

The Heralds of morn in the east are glowing
And boldly lifting the veil of night;
Whitney and Shasta are bravely showing
Their crowns of snow in the morning light.

The town is stirring with faint commotion,
In all its highways it throbs and thrills;
We greet you! Queen of the Western Ocean,
As you wake to life on your hundred hills.

The forts salute, and the flags are streaming
From ships at anchor in cove and strait;
O'er the mountain tops, in splendor beaming,
The sun looks down on the Golden Gate.

IN FIELDS NOT FAR AWAY

AS I went down where grazing herds
  Had sought the sylvan shade,
I caught the notes of nesting birds
  In all the leaf-lined glade.

I walked knee-deep amid the bloom
  And fragrance born of Spring,
While flush of spray and flash of plume
  Illumined wood and wing.

Entranced with all I saw and heard,
  As home I fared elate,
I hummed the very air the bird
  Was singing to his mate.

Ah, could we hear, when meaner things
  Enthrall us day by day,
The wondrous song the glad lark sings
  In fields not far away!

POINT BONITA

THE foam-lines flash, the wind pipes free,
The city looms in sight;
The clouds drift in across the lea,
And on the gray strand beats the sea,
Intoning day and night.

No sunlight on the landscape lies,
No song-birds flit and sing,
But wild geese with their clanging cries
Sweep on athwart the brooding skies,
Like Nomads on the wing.

Out on the links I stroll at ease,
And there I watch and wait,
As on and off before the breeze
The ships beat inward from the seas
And pass the Golden Gate.

Around Twin Peaks, above the town,
The misty vapors creep;
And Russian Hill looks dimly down
Where Alcatraz and Fort Point frown,
Grim warders of the deep.

And, looming up, Lone Mountain lifts
  Its cone against the sky,
And softly through the broken rifts
The sunlight for a moment sifts
  And gilds the cross on high.

I hear the call, and counter-call,
  Of wild birds on the wing;
While bud and bough are held in thrall,
Till dark December lifts its pall
  And ushers in the spring.

There is a charm in Earth's gray shroud,
  Its solemn undertone;
When sea and shore are sobbing loud,
And tears are in the trailing cloud,
  And wind and wave make moan.

IN CALM AND STORM

O SEA! thou art so false and yet so fair;
  Erewhile, in summer silence, thou didst sleep,
  And, lazily, thy lapsing waves did creep
Along the shining sands, while here and there
A toying breath of soft autumnal air
  Dropped down to kiss and curl the drowsy deep.
So like a tigress lurking in her lair—
A serpent coiled to strike me unaware—
  For now thy marching waves in rhythmic sweep,
  Like white-plumed squadrons, charge the scarpèd steep,
And reeling tempests rave and lightnings glare.
O Sea! a ghastly harvest thou dost reap,
  While waiting wives and mothers watch and weep,
And yet thy lovers deem thee debonair.

THE DERELICT

UNMOORED, unmanned, unheeded on the deep,
Tossed by the restless billow and the breeze,
It drifts o'er sultry leagues of tropic seas
Where long Pacific surges swell and sweep.

When pale-faced stars their silent watches keep,
From their far rhythmic spheres, the Pleiades,
In calm beatitude and tranquil ease,
Smile sweetly down upon its cradled sleep.

Erewhile, with anchor housed and sails unfurled,
We saw the stout ship breast the open main
To round the Stormy Cape and span the world,
In search of ventures which betoken gain.
To-day, somewhere, on some far sea, we know
Her battered hulk is heaving to and fro.

THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

THE MUSE OF ROMANCE

YOU are known, I believe, as a man about town;
If you go as you ought to the Bas Bleu soirée
You will meet Mrs. D. in a chic Paris gown;
She will chat, as she toys with her fan and bouquet,
Of the lyrics, and lays of Mistral and Daudet,
And will even repeat, *sub rosa*, perchance,
The refrain of Gringoire with an accent Anglais,
For the fad of the hour is the Muse of Romance.

You will doubtless encounter a stare and a frown
From a prig who pretends to be wise and *au fait;*
For the "Set" will insist you should know Mr. Brown,
But the Lord knows who Brown is, I don't, nor do they,

Though his father made money in "Ophir," they say;
He's Sir Oracle now, you will see at a glance,
And has written a double *ballade*, by the way,
For the fad of the hour is the Muse of Romance.

As for me, give me rather the heath and the down,
The glory of Autumn, the freshness of May,
The bold mountain peak with its white-crested crown,
The hiss of the squall and the flash of the spray;
A fig for the fustian of frill and of fray,
The knight and the lady, the tilt and the dance,
The gay cavalcade and the stately array,
Though the fad of the hour is the Muse of Romance.

ENVOY

Ho, Villon! you conjured the rhymes in your day,

THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

Like a bold troubador and a gallant free-
lance,
But your ghost is disturbed and the devil's to
pay,
For the fad of the hour is the Muse of Ro-
mance.

WAITING

I HEAR his footstep on the stair,
My heart responds with quickened beat,
As to my ear the sound-waves bear
The eager accent of his feet.

O heart! my heart, canst thou gainsay
The hope that echoes in his tread?
He comes to woo and win to-day,
To-morrow he may come to wed.

AND OTHER POEMS

VIGNETTES

I

I HAVE somewhere the sketch of a cottage
home,
With the sunlight flooding the humble room;
While the south wind tosses the mottled foam
Of the orchard boughs in their bloom.

Under trailing roses a maiden stands,
Demurely sweet in her simple guise;
A quiet grace in her folded hands
And a world of faith in her eyes.

She dreams the dear dreams of youth and of
hope,
Of a knight who is coming from over the
sea—
Of a fairy castle on wooded slope,
Of the lover that is to be.

II

With suitors in waiting on either hand,
A proud dame watches the tide as it flows.
Minerva in marble is not more grand
Than is she in her cool repose.

THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

Her make-up, a marvel of pink and of pearl,
Self-poised, she turns in her conscious grace—
From the braided coils of her hair a curl
Falls over the billows of lace.

Or she sits at her ease and calmly smiles—
Her lord has been dead for a year and a day—
Weaving the web of her well-bred wiles
In a nonchalant, listless way.

ENVOY

Time is a worker of wonders; I knew
Both the artless maid and the stately dame;
And strange indeed, as it seems the two
Were verily one and the same.

GUIDO

I KNOW you are fair,
But what do I care
For the lustre of eyes
And the ripple of hair.
The earth is forlorn, and the heavens are lead;
Since under the arch of the pitiless skies,
Guido, brave Guido, my brother, lies dead.
Together we three,
That is, Guido and I,
And the mother who bore us,
Lived in a cottage that looks on the sea;
The mountains behind, and the glad waves before us,
And over us ever the blue of the sky.
We breasted the deep in the gray of the morning,
And mended our nets at the ebb of the tide;
And we laughed,
And we chaffed,
At the fond mother's warning,
Who could not forget how our good father died.
Thus peacefully speeded
The seasons unheeded,

THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

Till rumors were rife
Of the roar of the battle and din of the strife;
There was call for the lovers of country to
come,
And Guido grew restless, I knew what it meant,
He was life of my life, and together we went;
Oh! her eyes were so dry and her lips were so
dumb,
As we marched away,
At the break of day,
To the blare of the trumpet, and beat of the
drum.
It was grand to rally for freedom and God;
But, oh the ruin, and oh the cost;
We conquered the foe, but the battle is lost,
Since Guido, dear Guido, lies under the sod.
The red lights flash forth from the red-tiled
town,
And the brazen tongues of the bells ring out,
And the men and women go up and down,
And meet us,
And greet us,
With cheer and shout;
But a mother stands watching beside the door,
While the spent waves moan on the shingly
shore.

FLORENCE

ENAMORED of thy beauty, I am here,
To find thee robed in color everywhere;
Spring, with her garlands woven fresh and fair,
Crowns thee with youth eternal, year by year.

From out thy Campanile the bells ring clear,
And round about Duomo's marble stair
Thy careless children, gay and debonair,
Make light of toil, with jocund laugh and jeer.

Across the years I scan thy stormy past
And mark thy dauntless stand against control
With Guelph and Ghibeline in fierce array.
And though enthralled at times, by creed and cast,
What deathless names are on thy blazoned scroll,
While Art, triumphant, holds its tranquil sway.

EL SALVADOR

A CRESCENT bay, and crested peaks on high,
With wooded flanks which seaward slope between,
Embossed with fold on fold of deathless green,
And over all an arch of turquoise sky.

Thus I recall, with half-regretful sigh,
The sights and sounds of that exotic scene;
Its wealth of tint and tone, its airs serene,
Which erstwhile charmed my wistful ear and eye.
A dreamy land of indolence and ease,
With budding boughs and vines and fruitful trees,
Where birds on gold and scarlet wings flash by;
Beside a reed-thatched hut nude children play,
While to and fro the palm trees idly sway,
And spent waves swoon upon the shore and die.

WHEN RICHARD LOVELACE CAME TO WOO

THE feet of time make fast apace,
And we, like players in a play,
Strut up and down our little space,
And act our parts as best we may;
Alas! Alack! and well-a-day!
The stage is dight in sombre hue,
Where once that stately vogue held sway,
When Richard Lovelace came to woo.

And much we marvel as we trace
The feuds and foibles passed away;
While pomp of power and pride of place
Troop down the years in grand array.
In court and camp, in fete and fray,
Fickle and flippant, staunch and true,
Such were the gallants, bold and gay,
When Richard Lovelace came to woo.

In doublet fine and frills of lace,
The lover sought his suit to pay;
With such a form and such a face,
Who could resist his plea, I pray?

And then that tender roundelay,
  So like a wood-dove's plaintive coo,
Sweet Lucy could not say him nay,
  When Richard Lovelace came to woo.

ENVOY

HO, Kentish Towers! your lordly race
  Had swords to draw, and deeds to do,
In that eventful Year of Grace,
  When Richard Lovelace came to woo.

O SLY BO-PEEP

O SLY Bo-Peep! behind a chair,
I catch a glimpse of tangled hair,
And laughing eyes and dimpled cheek;
Then comes a challenge, faint and weak,
As if to lure me to thy lair.

With loud pretense, I wonder where,
Behind what door, upon what stair,
And hear, when found, thy joyous shriek;
O sly Bo-Peep!

In after years, grown passing fair,
When hearts, perchance, are in the snare,
Pray tell what games of "hide and seek"
Wilt thou provoke in pet or pique,
Until Love comes to find thee there?
O sly Bo-Peep!

THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

JEAN

A WEE sma' sprite wi' dainty airs,
  Adown the garden goes;
Her een are like twa twinklin' stars,
  Her lips are like the rose.

She lures us wi' a roguish beck,
  She wiles us wi' a ca',
An' when we heed, she cranes her neck,
  Then hies hersel' awa'

We hear her tunefu' laughter trill,
  She dances doun the lawn,
Her voice is like the ripplin' rill,
  Her footfa' like the fawn.

May ye, sae winsome an' sae fair,
  In a' the years that pass,
Na feel the blight o' cark an' care,
  My bonnie, bonnie lass.

TO AN OLD COPY OF SHAKESPEARE

YOUR dog-eared leaves are dark with age,
  Your covers dull and dusty,
And as I turn the time-worn page
  I catch an odor musty.
Upon your imprint I would trace,
  Despite the blots in plenty,
The printer's name, the year of grace—
  'Tis A. D. something, 'XX.

Some Grub-street bookman brought you out,
  His name, it does not matter;
We trust, if Parker, Blount or Stout,
  His pocket waxed the fatter.
You seem to smack of London Town,
  The Tavern in the City,
Where rare Ben Jonson sat him down
  To converse wise and witty.

Were you ensconced in some sly nook
  Of box, or bag, or basket?
Or kept you watch and ward, O book!
  Within the prompter's casket,

THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

When Burbage mouthed Othello's rage
  And made Blackfriars thunder,
When Lowin stormed across the stage
  With stalk and strut, I wonder?

God wot it was a goodly play
  When lackeys were berating
My Lady's chair that blocked the way,
  While rank and fame were waiting.
Ah me, the days of Good Queen Bess,
  The days of famous writers,
Of frills and stays and stilted dress,
  Of gallant fops and fighters.

You conjure up a fruitful past,
  Albeit fact or fable;
The old-time Worthies in the cast,
  The Master on my table.
Across the wire a call is made
  And I respond instanter;
The ghosts are laid, the visions fade,
  O tempora mutantur!

PAX VOBISCUM

WHEN the bells are ringing at Christmas-tide
For the Crucified Son of Man,
I think of the martyred souls that have died
Since ever the world began.

The men of a cause, the men of a creed,
The men of the sword and pen,
Who, with dauntless courage in word and deed,
Have died for their fellow-men.

When the battle was waged for cross or crown,
They struck for God and the right;
And some at the scaffold or stake went down,
And some in the stormy fight.

Their blood may have sprinkled the senseless clod,
Their dust on the winds be strown;
But the hero-soul is the soul of God,
And ever He knows His own.

Thus onward and upward the trend will be,
Till we find the blameless way;

THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

In the fullness of time we yet may see
The dawn of a perfect day.

All hail! and farewell to our Worthies then,
On the far Plutonian shore,
And peace and good-will to the Children of men
Forever and evermore.

THE HUMMING-BIRD

IN gold, and green, and purple sheen,
A wingèd meteor is seen.
With sharp, prismatic flash of light
It shoots athwart the startled sight;
Plays on the lilac's purple bloom
With drone of wing and glint of plume;
Then on the calyx of the rose
An emerald gleams, a ruby glows;
A moment here, a moment there,
A moment poises in the air;
And then, across the open space,
The gem incarnate darts apace.

OFF CAPE ST. LUCAS

WHEN summer seas are tranquil
And summer skies aglow,
Our trim yacht in the offing
Rocks idly to and fro.

But when the cloud-rack gathers,
Our skipper looks alee,
Hauls taut the weather-braces
And seeks the open sea.

He knows the hidden danger
That lurks along the shore;
He sees the foam-lines flashing
And hears the breakers roar.

Forewarned by cloud and spindrift,
Ho Skipper! staunch and true,
In God and stars confiding,
We sail the seas with you.

SAN CARLOS

ITS arches laid in the long ago,
When the Mission Fathers came,
With its towers above and nave below—
San Carlos of sacred fame.

They set their feet on the wave-worn strand,
With words of peace and good-will,
And saw before them a goodly land
Of valley and wooded hill.

There were pink and purple peaks outlined
Against the blue of the sky;
All months were May, and ever the wind
On its velvet wings went by.

With holy zeal, on the heights above,
They reared these walls on the sward,
Crowned with the emblem of faith and love—
The cross of our Sovereign Lord.

But faith and love were of small avail
In the quest that was to be,
With eager feet on the landward trail
And full-blown sails on the sea.

To that house not made with hands on high
They have passed forevermore;
The winds through the broken arches sigh,
The ebb-tide moans on the shore.

Where the Padre Serra knelt, a glow
On the silent chancel falls;
And there in his crypt he sleeps below
The rift in the ruined walls.

UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

WHEN in the eyes of my dumb friend I gaze—
My faithful dog, his head upon my knee—
A fixed and fond solicitude betrays
The premonition of a devotee.
'Tis then the haunting question I propound—
A question asked, but never answered yet—
Does that rare insight reach beyond the bound
Where those who die forsake us and forget?
He might reveal the secret if he dare,
And give the fateful answer which I seek,
Of life before and after, whence and where,
Alas! God made him dumb, he cannot speak.

TO THE UNKNOWN GOD

ALL hail to Thee, Force of the Forces!
The pulse of atomic vibration,
The germ of conception and being,
The impulse of matter and mind.
Thine, Thine, are the infinite sources,
A function of endless duration,
The rythm of sound and of seeing,
The soul of the soul of mankind.

The myths of the centuries hoary,
As told by the seers and the sages,
Awaken a smile of derision
At the faiths and the fables of yore.
We question the stars, and their story,
Proclaimed by the audible ages,
Reveals to our wondering vision
The past and its mystical lore.

Thou, thou art the motive and motion,
The Life and the Life Everlasting,
Which thrills and pervades and possesses
Each atom in limitless space.

Men pay Thee a form of devotion,
With sacrifice, penance, and fasting,
To solace the soul that transgresses,
For thus saith the Gospel of Grace.

Uncompassed of time and location,
Fulfilled of desire and endeavor,
The soul finds its final fruition,
Dismantled of flesh and its thrall.
We pass from the stress of probation,
To peace that endureth forever;
For death is not death but transition;
And Thou art the All and in All.

MY ORIENT

SPELL-BOUND beside the languid stream,
Breathing the lotus balms,
I lie amid the ferns and dream
Of Oriental palms.

Where now, with most ungainly strides,
The lazy heron feeds,
Methinks the sacred ibis hides
Among the river reeds.

The sunbeam's golden arrows fall
About me in the grass;
I hear the midges' bugle-call
To combat, as they pass.

I see the emmets' pyramid,
And watch their caravans,
Like camels on the march amid
Sahara's desert sands.

One horseman dashes o'er the plain,
One stands beside the gate;
Al Hassan seeks the camel train,
While Mahmoud lies in wait.

An aged sheik, with wrinkled brows,
  Sits in the evening sun,
And gathers dates from oaken boughs,
  As I perhaps have done.

The silent twilight hour draws near,
  The crescent gleams in air,
And I, expectant, wait to hear
  Muezzin's call to prayer.

THE HUNGRY HEART

ABOU HARIRI—world renowned—
Tells how a starving Arab found
A diamond lying on the ground.

"Oh, if this shining stone instead
Were but a single date," he said,
"A cruse of oil, a crust of bread."

The rarest jewels of the mine
Upon the heaving breast may shine,
And yet the hungry heart will pine.

ART ETERNAL

WHAT marvels, wrought in tint and tone,
The Master's fruitful hand hath told
On frescoed nave and carven stone,
Where "Hail the Victor" rang of old,
When proud triumphal chariots rolled
Along the far-famed Appian way,
Now peasants mind the field and fold,
While Art, eternal, holds its sway.

The world a stage, from zone to zone,
The mimic kings and queens have strolled,
With laugh and jest and sigh and moan;
Their words of fire are fierce and bold,
Their words of scorn are calm and cold,
Or light or tender, sad or gay,
They turn their tinsel into gold,
While Art, eternal, holds its sway.

Strange airs, from Delphian slopes, are blown,
Since erst the wingèd horse was foaled;
Across the years the spell is thrown,
And fast within our hearts we hold

A wealth no miser's hand hath doled;
The king, by grace of God, to-day
May die and lie beneath the mould,
While Art, eternal, holds its sway.

ENVOY

O fair-haired Goddess! silver stoled,
We dance in dreams with Faun and Fay,
And pipe with Pan adown the wold,
While Art, eternal, holds its sway.

WHO KNOWS?

CONFRONTED from within and from without
By vague, uncertain questions that arise;
Condemned if only we presume to doubt
The dogmatists whom mortals canonize.

Must we without complaint, deceived, undone,
Cold-eyed and calm, accept the cruel fate
Which robs us of our treasures one by one
And still unsated leaves us desolate?

Must we conceal our motives from the world,
And sacrifice our candor to our fears?
And while the heart is crushed must lips be curled,
A frozen sneer above a sea of tears?

Must face and voice—by subtle sense or sight,
Which we have somewhere seen or heard before—
With strange perverseness haunt us day and night,
The fabled skeleton behind the door?

Prometheus-like, must we with hopeless sighs,
Chained and dejected, pace the weary round,
Seeking with hungered hearts and eager eyes
The something longed for and yet never found?

Will no fruition come with calm repose
When death rings down the curtain to the play?
By His harmonious law and love—who knows?
Perchance the problem may be solved some day.

THE ICEBERG

LO! on our weather bow there seems to be
A spectral ship which gives no answering hail;
Its stealthy presence makes the stoutest quail;
And as we reach to windward fast and free,
We leave the floating phantom on our lee,
To drift from zone to zone without avail,
The toy of tossing tide and driving gale—
A white-robed spectre on the wide, wide sea.
High o'er the frozen bulwark flies the spray,
And through the mist a shaft of sunlight streams;
Amid the ghostly shrouds the rainbows play,
And all the frosted fretwork glints and gleams—
Drift on to be dissolved, and then to rise
Type of the soul that dies, and never dies.

SUTTER'S FORT

I STOOD by the old fort's crumbling wall,
On the eastern verge of the town;
The sun through clefts in the ruined hall
Flecked with its light the rafters brown.

And, sifting with gold the oaken floor,
Seemed to burnish the place anew;
While out and in, through the half-closed door,
Building their nests, the swallows flew.

Charmed by the magic spell of the place,
The present vanished, the past returned;
While rampart and fortress filled the space
And yonder the Indian camp-fires burned.

I heard the sentinel's measured tread,
The challenge prompt, the quick reply;
I saw on the tower, above my head,
The Mexican banner flaunt the sky.

Around me were waifs from every clime,
Blown by the fickle winds of chance;

THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

Knights-errant, ready at any time,
For any cause, to couch a lance.

The staunch old captain, with courtly grace,
Owner of countless leagues of land,
Benignly governs the motley race,
Dispensing favors with open hand.

His long-horned herds on the wild oats feed,
While brown vaqueros, with careless rein,
Swinging reatas, at headlong speed
Are dashing madly over the plain.

Only a moment the vision came;
Where tower and rampart stood before,
Where flushed the night with the camp's red flame,
Dust and ashes and nothing more.

Borne to my ear on the ambient air,
Mingled with sounds of childish glee,
I heard again the low hum of care,
Like the restless moan of the sea.

EL RIO SACRAMENTO

WHERE ice-clad summits greet the morn,
And where the beetling crags look down
On dark blue lakes with sullen frown,
This bantling of the clouds is born.
Forth from its granite cradle creeps,
At first in play it laughs and leaps
And then in dusky pools it sleeps.
Down silent sunless glens it glides
And under long sedge grasses hides,
Where aspen leaves, like quivering wings,
Quaver above its hidden springs.

Anon, in silver-sheeted falls,
It leaps the terraced mountain walls
And tumbles into rocky urns,
Beflecked with foam and fringed with ferns.
At last this half-grown infant, fed
By melting snow and falling rain,
Like Bruin chafing with his chain,
Growls hoarsely in its granite bed
And ploughs its pathway to the plain.
Meanwhile, by some designing will
Harnessed and schooled, it turns the mill,

And with its ponderous sledge unlocks
The concrete coffers of the rocks.

In middle summer, lank and lean,
It creeps the shelving banks between;
And then, in spring and autumn tide,
Crimson with carnage, flushed with pride,
In serried ranks of gleaming pikes,
It dashes on the yielding dikes
And breaks the ramparts, rushing down
Upon defenseless farm and town.

In tamer moods content to hold,
By croft and thorp, by field and fold,
Past orchard boughs and bending grain,
Past grazing herds and loaded wain,
Past children laughing at their play,
The devious tenor of its way.

In ceaseless, silent sweep, between
Low-lying meadows, rank and green,
Along the marge of bastioned banks,
Its dimpled face reflects the ranks
Of gray-beard oaks; its liquid kiss
Thrills all the river reeds with bliss;

The thirsty fibrils of the vine
Reach down to quaff its amber wine;
The grasses and the willows lave
Their tangled tresses in its wave.
The silver thread has grown to be
A molten avalanche set free.
Its path the highway of the world,
Where sails of commerce are unfurled.
Emblem of Time's resistless tide
On, and still on, its currents glide,
Until, at length, far, far below
It weds the sea with stately flow.

TO SIR HENRY IRVING

(Read at a dinner given to Mr. Irving by the Bohemian Club, San Francisco, September 10, 1893.)

IN this our realm, heart speaks to heart; and here,
Upon the utmost verge of western lands,
With honest Saxon speech and cordial hands,
We give you greeting hearty and sincere.
You touch the zenith in your wondrous rôle;
We hear again the voice of that grand age
When Avon's Bard unmasked the very soul
And left its secrets on his deathless page.
No narrow ties entrammel us, but we
Hail him as Master who takes foremost part
In the wide world of letters and of art.
To that historic land beyond the sea,
Where hawthorn hedges bloom and daisies blow,
Our hearts and hopes go with you when you go.

CON AMORÈ—CON DOLORÈ
1872 1896

I MIND me of that long-gone year,
When stout Jo Tilden planned the cheer
And Chismore wrote the clever verses;
We sat and hatched our quibbles queer,
And Parker brought us pots of beer,
If we had shekels in our purses.

I see them in the waning lights,
The frantic Barbour in his tights,
And Beard, the grangers' friend and brother;
And Hawes, who made such valiant fights
On voting days and tilting nights,
Just now coquetting with another.

And Clay and Caspar, Jack and John,
And Frank and Ned, and Will and Juan,
And genial Clint, the would-be punster;
And George, but more of him anon;
The Count, the Baron, and the Don,
And Royal Dan the King of Munster.

Still Doctor Behr's rare wit I hear,
See Tommy Newcomb's smiling sneer,

And bold Smith Clark and Major Bender;
Cremony's grim, sardonic leer,
Half brigand and half cavalier,
And yet his heart was soft and tender.

We have our lares in the hall,
Our pictured Saints upon the wall,
Our outward comforts and our inner;
There's John and Peter, James and Paul,
And Jo, who is no Saint at all,
But such a cool, delightful sinner.

A would-be monk in gabardine—
Charles Warren is his name, I ween—
His "South Sea Idyls" has forsaken;
And dear Prince Hal, with courtly mien,
A pair of demoiselles between,
Is overmatched, or I'm mistaken.

There's Captain Jim, we call him père,
As staunch and true as Legadare,
For words of praise he would not thank me;
Our shelves speak louder than I dare,
I hope with him one day to share
That heaven where he will outrank me.

Lo, Uncle George, with face benign,
As mellow as Falernian wine
  And sparkling as the widow Cliquot;
Long may we hear that voice of thine,
As in the days of auld lang syne,
  Long life to thee, my old amigo.

Ho youngsters, cease your rant and roar,
The roll is being called once more,
  We mark the missing con dolorè;
The dead outcount us by a score,
The best, perhaps, have gone before;
  "Lord love us," was our toast of yore,
And thus we pledge you, con amorè.

DREYFUS

YES, send the victim to his living death;
For thus, to glut your hate, the martyr dies.
The world has watched the farce with bated breath,
And baffled Justice hides her sightless eyes.

Are you the sons of sires who scaled the height
Of Saint Bernard when tempests raved and reeled,
And bore your Eagles in the fiery fight
When Desaix died upon Marengo's field?

Hushed is the echo of their battle-tramp.
Hang up your father's rusted sword and lance!
Sound not the Marseillaise in field and camp!
The Sun of Austerlitz has set for France.

"PEACE BE WITH YOU"

"PEACE be with you!" Where is there peace,
I cry,
And where can freedom find a safe retreat?
In storm and strife one century goes by,
Another comes with gory hands and feet.

The Prince of Peace again is crucified,
For Justice from her high estate is hurled;
The ancient metes and bounds are thrust aside
By Cæsars who would have and hold the world.

The hosts go forth as in the days of Saul,
And Gog and Magog gather for the fight;
And lo! the Celt, the Saxon and the Gaul
Divide His raiment with the Muscovite.

The Mongol hordes are on the march once more,
Their Dragon banners flaunt the eastern sky;
From Manchu battlements we hear the roar,
And faint and far the Macedonian cry.

THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

"Vengeance is mine," He saith; "I will repay."
What He hath promised that will He perform;
And if, unmindful of His sovran sway,
We sow the whirlwind, we shall reap the storm.

THE BUTTERFLY

SEE, where the tortuous torrent glides,
Amid the leaves a pansy hides.
I stoop to pluck it there,
And lo, it swings,
On living wings,
Above me in the air.
Alas! this oriental bloom
Is but the pretense of perfume—
A moth tricked out for masquerade,
In gold and purple robes arrayed.
A chrysalis would be a flower,
And breaks its filmy thralls;
Then on its flaunting wings it flies
One little hour;
And when it dies
An oscillating spangle falls.

THE DEATH-WATCH

YOUR measure of bliss was more than filled
When you drank the wine of her lips;
You reeled with delight while your pulses thrilled
To the touch of her finger tips.

Her form is so fine and her face so fair,
And her voice so low when she speaks;
The hue of the primrose is on her hair
And the tint of dawn on her cheeks.

God gave her the face of a saint, and you
Saw her only in saintly guise;
'Tis barely a month since she vowed to be true,
This woman with wonderful eyes.

'Tis barely a month, but her vows are vain,
And she meets you with cool repose;
Not a pulse of passion or pang of pain
Do her wonderful eyes disclose.

THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

Your hope is a corpse, and with pallid brow
  You stand by the pall of the dead;
Only the death-watch is left to you now;
  So watch there with eyelids of lead.

BEREFT

A BIRD came down the wind one morn
  And nested in our tree;
That very day our babe was born,
  And then we numbered three.

But when the summer slipped away,
  Our roses turned to rue;
The bird took wing one autumn day,
  And we are only two.

THE GLOAMING

THE West is in a blaze of gold;
The day in regal splendor dies,
And silence falls on field and fold.

While, in the East, I now behold
The full-faced moon in glory rise,
The West is in a blaze of gold.

The darkness deepens in the wold,
And soft the evening zephyr sighs,
And silence falls on field and fold.

As timid stars, grown overbold,
Peep, one by one, from out the skies,
The West is in a blaze of gold.

The gowan nestles in the mould,
The dewdrop on the heather lies,
And silence falls on field and fold.

The hearth is warm, the heath is cold,
A wight, belated, homeward hies,
The West is in a blaze of gold,
And silence falls on field and fold.

ANOTHER FOOL

A FOOL there was, and he lost his soul,
For his soul was steeped in sin;
His house of clay was a carnal house,
And the Devil dwelt therein.

He gave his life to folly and flesh,
The lust of women and wine;
And lavished his substance here and there,
Till he quenched the spark divine.

The Sirens smiled and the wine-cups foamed
When he ran his race, I ween;
And the Devil and he played dice, they say.
For the fair and frail Faustine.

He thought he knew, but he did not know,
Until he had found it out,
That a man in the toils of a sly Frou-frou
Must ever remain in doubt.

The sow to her wallowing in the mire,
The rake to his rut, say I;
But the wage is death, and even the fool
Will curse his folly and die.

DRIFTING

ACROSS San Pablo's heaving breast
I see the home-lights gleam,
As the sable garments of the night
Drop down on vale and stream.

The daylight on his royal couch
In crimson glory dies,
While northward, on belated wing,
The sad-voiced bittern flies.

For miles—from where yon rounded hills
Darken the southern sky—
I hear the bells of browsing kine
And catch the herder's cry.

Just where the silver of the moon
Falls on the shimmering tide,
Marking that line of light, I see
Twin islands side by side.

Hard by, yon vessel from the seas
Her cargo homeward brings,
And soon, like sea-bird on her nest,
Will sleep with folded wings.

THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

The fisher's boat swings in the bay
From yonder point below,
While ours is drifting with the tide
And rocking to and fro.

Carelessly rocking to and fro,
As shifts the fitful stream,
Two Nimrods dreaming as we drift,
And sketching as we dream.

POOR LITTLE JO

THEY say that Our Father in Heaven knows best,
But why is it so!
Dead at the dawn, and gone to her rest,
Poor little Jo.
Ours by the mandate of God,
Gift of His infinite grace,
All that is left of her under the sod,
With the rain of our tears on her face.
Uncover my heart if you must,
While I utter the wail of my woe,
Ashes to ashes and dust to dust,
Poor little Jo.

FORECAST

LIKE the hand of a man is the cloud that I see,
An omen of wrath in the blue of the sky;
The phantom appalls, and I ask, can it be
The wraith of the storm ere the tempest sweeps by?

We feast at the banquet and flaunt at the fête,
While Lazarus waits for the crumbs as they fall;
There's faction and feud in the councils of state,
While honor and honesty go to the wall.

Blasphemers of God, and the foes of mankind,
With sword and with fagot would lay the land waste;
Beware lest you wake from your slumbers to find
Your hearthstones defiled and your altars defaced.

THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

Think not that the plot of the spoiler is foiled,
Think not that the thug will refrain from his crime;
The tiger is crouched and the serpent is coiled,
They are lying in wait and biding their time.

These minions of Satan, these monsters of prey,
Are they flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone?
For of such is the Kingdom of Hell, and they
Are the dragon's teeth which our follies have sown.

SHAKESPEARE

THE years, O Bard! add lustre to thy name;
We hail thee, wonder of a wondrous age;
And when high art portrays thy peopled page,
We see, as London saw, with loud acclaim,
Macbeth take counsel of his haughty dame,
The Hunchback storm across the mimic stage,
The Moor, made mad with passion, vent his rage,
And fat Jack Falstaff vaunt his deeds of shame.
The men begotten in thy peerless brain
Are types of hero, villain, braggart, fool;
Thy women, women to the very core.
For thy rare counterpart we seek in vain;
Seer of no sect, and helot of no school,
Reign thou in high Parnassus evermore.

HAR-MA-KHU

THE SPHINX

TO hold eternal vigil o'er the place,
By Ghiza's royal tomb it couchant lies
Beneath the solemn arch of Egypt's skies—
A nameless type of terror and of grace.

The toil and torment of a patient race,
Thou must have seen with fixed and stony eyes—
Have heard their hapless moans, their helpless cries,
With that same tranquil and impassive face.

The seal of silence on thy lips is laid,
The myths are dumb, tradition gropes in vain
To solve the voiceless records of the dead;
And while the broken tablets fall and fade,
Defied by thee, the ages wax and wane,
And baffled Time goes by with noiseless tread.

MA PAUVRE PETITE

THE lamps glow within, the storm raves without;
I sit at mine ease in the softened light
And think of Ginevra. She seemed so devout,
I wonder if ever the shade of a doubt,
Crossed the mind of her lord ere that night.

I look at the bubbles that dance and swim
On the amber wine like an elfin band,
And I dream of the past, while my eyes grow dim
As I carelessly kiss with my lips the rim
Of the antique glass in my hand.

A rustle of garments, a step in the hall,
And my princess comes in her queenly grace;
The grim Rembrandt smiles in his frame on the wall
When those fairy feet on the carpet fall
As she takes by my side her place.

I am dreaming, perchance, yet I know she is there;

THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

On my forehead I feel for a moment her kiss;
A subtle something is in the air,
An olive face with its dark brown hair—
But 'tis folly to speak of all this.

She chats in her charming, womanly way,
And I listen, or seem to listen, the while;
Somehow vaguely at length I hear her say,
"A bit of romance, or the plot of a play,
If only one blithe, bonny bird to beguile."

A story you ask for? well, so let it be;
Let me think—twenty years have gone by to a day.
How swiftly the summers have flown since we,
Two lads, in that quaint old town by the sea,
Idled and trifled the summer away.

We were scarcely nineteen—how the holidays flew,
Two naval cadets, off duty, on shore;
We did, I suppose, just as most middies do,
Squandered our pay in a mad lark or two,
Then starved for a month to make up the score.

Tom was my hero—I thought him divine;
He's an admiral now—won his stars at Mobile;
The veriest old sea-dog, they say, in the line—
Washes his face every morning in brine
And swears that he'll have on his coffin a keel.

We lodged in an attic just off from the park—
In a mocking mood we called it a den;
If I rightly remember, the square is St. Mark,
Houses on either side dingy and dark;
We would smile at it now—it suited us then.

For a neighbor we had—it is strange, I declare,
I can see him now in his singular guise—
A French émigré, with his silver hair
And his broken speech and port militaire,
And his wan little girl with her hungry eyes.

Once or twice only we met on the street,
All further advances seemed somehow in vain;
But morning and night we heard him repeat,

THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

"Ma pauvre petite, ma pauvre petite,"
  Till our own hearts caught up the refrain.

Said Tom, in his old, impetuous way,
  "Let's give them a sail in the yacht, my boy,
For the wind is a trifle fresh to-day,
And who knows, poor things, but a taste of salt spray
  Might change all their sorrow to joy."

In less than an hour, with eight or ten more,
  We had them on board of our staunch little craft;
The sails were all set, we standing off shore,
While the spray from the white-caps was flying before
  And the wind followed hard abaft.

Just how it all happened we never could tell;
  The child leaned on the rail by her grandpapa's side;
Our weather-bow must have been caught by the swell,
For there came a lurch and a cry, and she fell—
  And something white floated off on the tide.

Tom had the helm; in an instant he swung
And brought her to in the eye of the gale;
Two men were over, one old and one young;
But young arms are lusty, not likely to fail—
And how does my blithe, bonny bird like the tale?

What! You wish to hear more of the old émigré?
Not satisfied yet? it seems incomplete?
Well, look in my eyes. Don't you see, chère amie,
I, I was the lad who leaped into the sea,
And you, you were "ma pauvre petite."

THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

LADY JANE

AN ower true tale I fain would tell
Of Scottish border strife.
And how an English Earl did win
A Scottish maid for wife.

He was the Lord of Widdrington,
Her kinsmen were his foes,
And she was Fraser's lovely lass,
A bonny heather rose.

On Cheviot's flank his Lordship's troop
Had met the Fraser clan,
Were scattered in the headlong charge,
And routed horse and man.

And lost and lorn, and wounded sore,
A hunted stag at bay,
But for a maid who succored him,
The Earl had died that day.

She hid him in the rustling corn
And gave him food and rest,
The while her baffled kinsmen sped
Upon their bootless quest.

And in the gloaming, o'er the hills
She led him safe and sound,
Until he reached the border side
And trod on English ground.

Long raged the fierce and bloody feud,
Which rent the land in twain,
And many a lady mourned her lord,
And many a lass her swain.

Until one morn from Teviotdale
The word came down the glen
That all was lost and Widdrington
Held Fraser and his men.

Woe fell on matron and on maid,
But Janet sped away;
High o'er the Scottish hills she hied
To where the English lay.

She bade them lead her where their Chief
Stood with his kinsmen near,
And though her heart beat fast the while,
Her voice was calm and clear.

THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

"I am a Fraser's lass, my Lord,
Your grace I crave," she said;
Earl Widdrington made answer thus,
And bared his stately head:

"Your Chieftain's life is safe, my lass,
His fetters I will break,
And let the men of Fraser's clan
Go hence for your dear sake.

"You proved a steadfast friend to me
When I was sore beset,
I loved you then with all my heart,
I love you, lassie, yet.

"And here in presence of my kin,
That all may understand,
I sue you for your plighted troth,
I sue you for your hand."

"I crave your pardon if," said she,
"I seem distraught in mind;
The eagles with the eagles mate,
The thrushes seek their kind.

"You have your hawks, you have your hounds,
You have your bill and bow;
Such words will work me harm, my Lord,
I prithee let me go."

His brother Hugh laughed loud and said,
"Now, by my troth, I swear
My haughty kin would doff the rose,
And place the thistle there."

And while his kinsmen by his side
Laughed loud with bitter scorn,
Lord Widdrington, with flashing eyes,
Leaned on his saddle-horn.

"I give thee escort, gentle maid,
And home I go with thee;
For, by Saint Ann, I will not brook
These gibes and jeers," quoth he.

One blessed morn the wedding bells
Pealed from the castle fane,
And he was Lord of Widdrington,
And she was Lady Jane.

THEN AND NOW

A VAULTED roof, a columned nave,
  An oriel window whence the light
Gilds fretted arch and architrave,
  As moonlight gilds the night.
The old, old story of the heart;
  Beside the chancel, hand in hand,
A ring, a vow "till death do part,"
  Two wedded lovers stand.

A cold, dark sky, a darker sea,
  A foaming fringe of breaking surf;
Beside a gnarled and leafless tree
  A path of tender turf.
A woman kneeling on the sands,
  Two white lips parted as in prayer,
A Niobe with outstretched hands,
  Wrestling with fell despair.

A MEMOGRAPH

IT is strange, as I look at the play to-night,
That her form and her features should flash
on my sight.
The past and the present are set in the scene,
With the fathomless gulf of the years between;
While to and fro,
In the mimic show,
The ghosts of the actors come and go.
Time and the traces of time are gone,
And we live and move in the splendor of dawn.
As I saw her once, I can see her yet,
But her heart seems filled with a vague regret,
For when Juliet weeps her cheeks are wet.
Who cares for the sneer of the worldly wise,
When youth looks down with its love-lit eyes.
Sir Romeo waits at the wings for his call,
And a strain of Strauss
Thrills the breathless house,
While a glory and glamor are over it all.
O the sights, and the sounds, and the one face
there,
With the rose I had given her twined in her
hair.

THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

ON THE HEIGHTS

("The rock fell under us in one sheer sweep, thirty-two hundred feet.")

HE crawls along the mountain walls,
From whence the severed river falls;
Its seething waters writhe and twist,
Then leap, and crumble into mist.
Midway between two boundless seas
Prone on a ragged reef he lies;
Above him bend the shoreless skies,
While helpless, on his bended knees,
Into that awful gulf profound,
Appalled, he peers with bated breath,
Clutches with fear the yielding ground,
And crouches face to face with death.
The fearful splendor of the sight
Begets in his bewildered brain
A downright torture of delight,
The very ecstacy of pain.
A sudden frenzy fills his mind,
If he could break the bonds that bind
And launch upon the waves of wind;

Only to loose his hold and leap,
Then, cradled like a cloud, to sleep
Wind-rocked upon the soundless deep.
With eyes upturned, he breaks the spell
And creeps from out the jaws of hell.
Pohono's siren wiles beguile—
He drinks her kisses in the wind,
He leaves the nether world behind.
Up and still upward, mile on mile,
With muffled tramp, the pilgrim creeps
Across the frozen winding-sheet,
Where white-faced death in silence sleeps.
Up and still upward, to the light,
Until at last his leaden feet
Have mocked the eagle in its flight.
Grim-browed and bald, Tis-sa-ack broods
Above these white-robed solitudes.
A mute, awe-stricken mortal stands
Upon the fragment of a world;
And, when the rifted clouds are curled,
Sees far below the steadfast lands.

THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

AN OFT-TOLD TALE

I RECOLLECT one certain night in June
(It seems to me our nights are dearer than our days),
When dust of silver from the moon
(As some familiar poet says)
Fell softly on the sea and land.
It was the night of nights; pray tell what harm
For youth and beauty, arm in arm,
To saunter down the yellow sand?
I quite forget just how it came about;
There was an earnest word, two hands held out,
And then upon his breast,
In momentary rest,
The mobile mouth and tender eyes
Were turned to him in glad surprise.
It was so very, very nice, you know,
To press her seaside hat against his vest,
A sweet foretaste of heaven, although
The rest was only momentary rest;
For, with remorseful start, she said:

"Alas! Alas! for me,
It cannot, cannot be;
To-morrow week I am to wed."
How small a word will grind the heart to dust;
A breath of air will break the thread
On which we hang our trust;
And while his lips were white and mute
He took from her the Dead Sea fruit,
And simply bowed his head.
An oft-told tale; it was the wealth
Of youth and hope and matchless health;
It was the opulence of brawny arms
Against the rent roll of a hundred farms.
Back to his dull, unconscious books
He went, with bruisèd heart and sharpened brain,
To school his thoughts and mask his looks
And nurse a purpose born of pain.
A trifle cynical he seems, and yet
He may, perhaps, forget.
"Hard hit," Sir Blasé says in well bred slang;
He sees the symptoms and has felt the pang.
Brave hearts will sometimes wince, he knows,
Will wince and still not whine,

THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

If once there is no color to the rose,
  No sparkle to the wine.
And she, she plays her wedded part
Right royally, with subtle art;
  And wears with pride her gilded chain;
But for the semblance of a heart
    We seek in vain.
  The man whose name she bears
  Is old and gray and bent with cares;
    But then, but then,
    He is the prince of men,
For she is mistress of the Riverside
And has a brown stone front in town beside.
  Time brings reprisals to us all,
And soon or late we learn the truth
  That stately pride will have its fall,
And that one little heart, forsooth,
  Outweighs it all.

HULDA

IN a castle built of stone,
Hulda sits and sighs alone.

Since her ill-starred natal day
Forty years have passed away.

Suitors had she by the score
In the palmy days of yore.

Belted knights of high degree
Came to woo on bended knee.

High she held her stately head;
"I will wed a prince," she said.

Homeward rode the knights forlorn,
As she turned from them in scorn.

But the prince came nevermore
In the palmy days of yore.

So she sits and sighs alone
In a castle built of stone.

DE PROFUNDIS

THE waves were beating along the shore,
And the wind swept by with a dismal moan,
As I entered the silent house once more
And groped my way to her room alone.

I had seen the pageant and heard the prayer,
And had watched the priest in the solemn rite,
But I could not think that my love lay there,
Robed for the tomb in her garments of white.

And I sought her chamber with one sole thought,
To find my love with her gentle face;
I could see the pictures her hand had wrought,
And her bird still hung in its wonted place.

A knotted scarf, and the fillet which bound
Her hair, lay there with its glittering pin;
I opened the leaves of a book and found
A rose I had given her pressed therein.

And I said she will surely come if I call—
She is only waiting to hear her name;
And I breathed the one she loved best of all,
But the way was dark and she never came.

I was dazed and dumb, and my eyes were dry,
And I watched and watched till the break of
dawn,
Then the rain of my tears fell fast, and I
Knew well that the life of my life was gone.

THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

AN ALLEGORY

SWEET Floribel,
I fain would tell
What once befell
Our neighbor's starling on a time:
Fed by a tender hand it hung
Upon a gilded perch and sung,
Until, alas! one hapless day,
Lured by a bird-note from the lime,
In wantonness it flew away.

Somewhere the fowler's snare is spread;
Unwary feet are sure to trip;
Forbidden fruits are sweet, 'tis said,
Yet turn to ashes on the lip.

Some fleeting, evanescent hours—
Amid the birds, amid the flowers—
Two silken wings were plumed with pride;
Then came the bitter night,
And ere the morning light
Our birdling drooped and died.

NEITHER DO I CONDEMN

I'VE sent for you, Will. I know you won't
mind;
You were always so silent and good—
When others were rude and unkind,
You alone understood.

Please bring your chair here, Will, close to my
side.
There—lift my head. I've something to say.
Oh, I thought last night I'd have died;
How I longed for the day.

Well again soon—do you think? Alas! no.
This pain at my heart like a knife—
But it matters not when I go
Out of this weary life.

Now, promise me, Will, to do what I ask;
And bend down while I whisper my name;
For women like me wear a mask
To cover and hide their shame.

THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

There's a little brown house on the hillside
And a white-haired old man left alone—
Oh, Will, if you knew how I've tried
All these years to atone.

Here's a package, a letter, and something more;
A lock of my hair—don't think it a whim;
Send them, dear Will, when all is o'er
With a kind word to him.

Conceal from him all of my wickedness;
Say that my heart ran over with love—
That I died praying God to bless
And unite us above.

Perhaps the dear God will forgive the sin
For the sake of His Son crucified,
And permit me to enter in,
Pardoned and purified.

Back of the town—on the slope, to the west—
Is a little grave. What! tears in your eyes?
Lay me there by her side to rest—
There where my baby lies.

O God! This pain—it is coming. Hark!
I shall die—don't leave me. Stay, Will, stay!
I'm going—your promise—so dark—
Pray for me, Will, oh, pray!

Dead. Let not the living adjudge the dead—
Unworthy to touch His garment's hem;
Remember the Master hath said,
"Neither do I condemn."

THE MESSIAH

HIS was the coming which the seers foresaw,
  His was the glory which men long to see,
  He was the God who died for you and me,
And we accept the sacrifice with awe.

His life and teachings are to us divine,
  They furnish dole for every human need;
  We would discard no dogma of the creed,
Nor blot a word, nor abrogate a line.

No doubting thought can turn our gold to dross,
  No sceptic sneer can hang our heaven with gloom;
And so we weep with Mary at the cross
  And humbly kneel with Mary at the tomb.
The banner of our Lord is now unfurled—
The dead Christ lives and dominates the world.

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

AT LAST AT REST

A WOMAN, worn and wan, lay dying
  At a rude wayside inn;
Winter's dead leaves without were flying,
  Dead hopes within.

No wet-eyed mourners took their places
  Beside the bed of death,
Or watched with sad, averted faces
  And bated breath.

Alone, uncared-for, and untended,
  Unshriven and unblessed—
A wayward, stormy life was ended,
  At last at rest.

If one could read the volume written
  In furrowed lines of care;
If one could learn the secrets hidden
  By frosted hair;

THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

How much that's wrong might thus be
righted—
How much might be made plain;
Alas! to us, so narrow-sighted,
God's ways seem vain.

SUMMER DAYS

HE came when stormy March was done
And April birds were on the wing,
When flush of sward and flash of sun
Lent light and color to the spring.

His smile made glad the summer days,
Until my foolish heart was stirred;
And as we walked the woodland ways,
I listened to his whispered word.

Now fields with bloom are not besprent,
And birds no longer pipe with glee;
He took the summer when he went,
And left the winter here to me.

THE MAHATMA'S REDE

CONVENED in the forest and couched on the sod,
We bow to the symbol and worship the God.
The smoke of His incense is rising on high,
The arch of His temple is spanned by the sky.
It is jeweled with stars and cloistered by trees,
Illumined by moonlight and fanned by the breeze.
His priests at the altars are standing apart;
They see with the spirit and hear with the heart.
His edicts are wordless, yet fixed and sublime;
Far wiser than wisdom and older than time.
To Him, the Eternal, sing pæans of praise!
The World without End, the Beginning of Days—
Almighty, All-knowing, All-seeing, Unseen—
The Master, the Maker, benign and serene.
The voices of Nature intone and adore
With thunder of billows that break on the shore;
The worlds in their orbits wheel onward above,
The fruit of His law and the proof of His love.

THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

What are we, pray tell, but a part of His plan—
The life of His life in the body of Man?
He breathes on the germ of the spiritless clod;
It stirs with emotion, half human, half God;
And thus we have being, develop and grow,
To work out our fate and to reap what we sow.
We live but to die, and we die but to live;
We lose what we gain, and we keep what we give;
We think and we reason, reflect and conceive,
We query and question, we doubt and believe;
And yet we are baffled and seek in despair
The why and the wherefore, the whence and the where.
The priests and the prophets in ages gone by
Heard sounds in the air and saw signs in the sky;
They fashioned a fabric of faith for our needs,
With its marvellous forms and its merciless creeds,
Invoking with carnage, while bigotry strove,
The wrath of Jehovah, the thunders of Jove.
Give cant to the dogs and give creeds to the wind,

For Gods that are false are the foes of mankind.
Inspired by himself, in this sphere where we dwell,
Man makes his own heaven; he makes his own hell.
We read in the unwritten gospel and know
That right begets joy and that wrong begets woe;
That pride is a pitfall and lust is a snare;
That sin may be foiled if we bear and forbear;
That abasement of self is more than the shrift;
That the giving of alms is more than the gift;
That calm contemplation will lure in its quest
The soul to Nirvana, the haven of rest.
Take counsel of conscience, my friends, I beseech;
Be slow in your anger and calm in your speech;
Be gracious in manner and gentle of mien,
With hearts that are loyal and hands that are clean;
Be just and be honest, be wise and discreet;
The victor is crowned in the hour of defeat.
I questioned my soul as I stood by the dead;
My soul in its anguish made answer and said,
No power can destroy, and no fiat create;

THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

For death is transition and life is a state,
The fruit of conditions coercive as fate.
Each atom of form and each atom of force
Exist as a part of their infinite source;
And whether in motion, or whether at rest,
Must live by a law that is never transgressed.
This then is the marvellous secret of death,
To live without life and to breathe without
breath.

MARIE

IT chanced that I, in years gone by,
Sought out one day, I scarce know why,
  The market of Aubette;
And I saw there a maiden fair,
With midnight eyes and golden hair,
  And fate and I had met.

I went again somehow, and then
I often went; for when, oh when,
  Will heedless youth beware?
The sweet surprise within her eyes,
As when the morn lights up the skies,
  Allured me unaware.

Her timid glance did so entrance
That I, beguiled thereby perchance,
  Deemed it a mere caprice;
Ah well-a-day, how quickly may
We fritter golden hours away,
  Which promise joy and peace.

An attic high, against the sky—
Affaire d'amour—a fragile tie—

THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

Two swallows 'neath the eaves
One hour ago I sought and lo!
No birds were there; the one I know
Has gone, the other grieves.

Dear lost Marie, I would not see
The heaven of love in store for me,
But turned with pride away.
So now I weep, and sadly keep
My mournful vigils o'er the sleep
Of her I spurned that day.

Could I forget I would, and yet,
Remorse is keener than regret,
Requiting pain with pain.
So when the bells ring solemn knells
I hither bring sweet immortelles;
Dead birds come not again.

SCHAMYL'S DEFEAT

HOW Caucasus peaks were flashing
'Neath their crowns of dazzling snow,
How the turgid streams were dashing
As we stemmed the torrent's flow;
Where the sun of summer dances
On the boundless steppes below,
Brightly, brightly, gleamed our lances
When we met the Russian foe.

O the ramp and roar of battle!
Beat of hoof and clash of steel—
While the volleys flash and rattle
And the squadrons charge and wheel;
Far and wide the hosts are scattered,
Long and loud the cannons peal;
Now our lines are torn and shattered,
Now our ranks recoil and reel.

Here amid the dead and dying,
Lost and lorn, and wounded sore—
On the cold earth I am lying,
And the night is closing o'er;
Grant, O grant a dawn of splendor

THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

There beside the Caspian shore,
Where my Mitska, true and tender,
Waits to greet her love once more.

Lo! the lurid light is creeping
Slowly up the eastern sky,
Round and round the vultures sweeping,
Watch the carnage from on high;
Soon the gaunt wolves will be snarling
O'er the corpses where I lie,
Weep not, weep not, O my darling!
For thy lover doomed to die.

IN THE SIERRAS

THE rocks loom o'er the tranquil vale,
  Like ruins vast and hoary;
Each gray old turret has its tale,
  Each seam and scar its story.

A hundred centuries have penned
  Upon these time-stained pages,
A secret lore, that is not kenned
  By wisest seers and sages.

The fire, the frost, perchance the storms
  Of some primeval ocean,
Have worn and torn these ragged forms,
  This petrified commotion.

The years have softened all the scene,
  The winds have sown the grasses;
And sun and rain have clothed with green
  The naked slopes and passes.

Here, on the granite crags I lie,
  Lulled by the wind's low wailing,
And watch against the distant sky
  The eagle slowly sailing.

THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

The silver moon, with mellow ray,
Across yon spur is drifting;
The roseate tints of dying day
Along the west are shifting.

The gray mist gathers in the gorge,
Where bright cascades are flowing;
While, like the gleam of lighted forge,
The snow-crowned peaks are glowing.

Rare pictures, born of sun and shade,
Come with the evening shadows;
Night nestles in the silent glade
And veils the emerald meadows.

Above, the moaning pine trees stand;
Below, the shining river;
Uncovered, in this temple grand,
I worship God, the Giver.

ENGLAND AT BAY

THEY have sought to revile you with jeers and with laughter,
Bold mother of empires and mistress of seas;
Let them look to their bulwarks whenever, hereafter,
The red cross of England is flung to the breeze.

From the Cape to the Baltic your pennants are flying;
The Czar and the Kaiser may press their demands,
With a muster, ere long, of the dead and the dying,
When the leash of the war hounds is slipped from your hands.

Do they think to dismay? Do they dare to defy you?
Do they dream that the spirit of England is dead?
It is well to recall, ere they seek to decry you,
The fields where the blood of the Briton was shed.

THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

If they read on the scroll of your grandeur and glory
The names that are deathless, the deeds that were done,
They will learn how replete is the page of your story,
How great are the triumphs which freedom has won.

In the hush of the tempest your foes are creating;
Ere the tocsin is sounded, the banners unfurled,
We can see on the ramparts, the Lion in waiting,
Alone and undaunted, confronting the world.

VICTORIA

Regina Imperatrix.
Read at the Jubilee Banquet, San Francisco, June 21, 1897.

O WOMAN, whose annals can never be torn
From the record of England's renown;
How wisely and well in your day you have borne
The burdens of scepter and crown.
Your hand on the pulse of the people, you feel
The throb that responds to your own;
Their will is the will and their weal is the weal
Of the Commons, the Lords, and the Throne.

Evolved by the fates and adjusted by time,
The poise of the nation is true;
Its future is fixed and its past is sublime,
And its glory is symboled in you.
Not the prowess of England, the might of her arms,
Wherever her flag is unfurled,

But the clang of her hammers, the tilth of her farms,
Have won her the marts of the world.

Your reign has been marked by the triumphs of peace,
Resplendent in letters and art;
O that war and the rumors of war may cease,
Is the cry of your woman's heart.
Type of all that is noblest in mother and wife,
We hail you, O Empress and Queen!
God save you! and grant that your autumn of life
Be peaceful, benign and serene.

WHAT MATTERS IT WHERE OR WHEN?

An Episode of the Morgue.

I AM tired of the bicker and banter of life,
I am tired of its serfdom and thrall,
I am tired of the stress and the strain and the strife,
I am tired of it all.

. . . . . .

The ghosts of my comrades come back to-night,
When the battle is well-nigh done;
How many there were who went down in the fight,
And how few there were who won.

I put my head down on my hands and think
Of the hopes that have passed me by,
Of the woman who gave me a cup to drink
And left me to drain it dry.

I am worn and weary and long for rest,
And there's no one to watch and weep;

THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

This life is only an hour at its best,
And after—a dreamless sleep.

The grim scythe-bearer, so gaunt and thin,
Reaps ever his harvest of men,
And sooner or later will garner us in;
What matters it where or when?

So here's to the fellow who laughs at fate
And falls with his face to the foe;
The embers are dead in the blackened grate—
I bid you good-night, and go.

FAITH

THE earth, our dwelling-place, is one vast tomb;
Man lives his little span and then he dies;
Ere long his handiwork in ruin lies,
And each and all meet one impending doom.

And yet while power and pride go down in gloom,
And fear before the dread Destroyer flies,
And tower and temple fall, no more to rise,
The little wayside flower bursts forth in bloom.

And lo! we learn that God himself doth reign;
The seasons come and go, and in their spheres
The planets wheel in rhythmic sweep and swell.
Death is not death, for God doth so ordain,
Faith bids us put aside our mortal fears,
And trust in Him who doeth all things well.

THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

PADRE KINO

AS read in old monastic lore,
So runs the legend of traditions,
Two hundred years ago and more,
Along Pimeria's arid shore,
Were seen a hundred white-walled missions.

Throughout the dread and desert lands,
Where roamed fierce tribes intent on pillage,
From Blanca's snows to Gila's sands,
Transformed by consecrated hands,
Bloomed fertile fields with careful tillage.

And where the iridescent morn
Once lit the waste with tinted lustres,
Amalthea filled her fabled horn
From meadows rank with tasseled corn
And hillsides flushed with purple clusters.

The subtle skill which deftly tilled
The barren dunes and sterile places,
By power assumed and pledge fulfilled
And timely word and deed, instilled
In savage breasts the Christian graces.

The mission bells betimes invite
To prayer and praise and prompt confession;
With awe the humble neophite,
On bended knees, each morn and night
Tells o'er his beads in deep contrition.

No Cortez, with his lances keen,
On conquest bent has hither drifted;
Only a sandled monk is seen,
With patient grace and prudent mien
And sacred symbol high uplifted.

Inspired to found a new crusade,
With fervent faith and fixed devotion,
From Salamanca's cloistered shade,
In mail of righteousness arrayed,
The Padre Kino crossed the ocean.

Within that sanctified retreat,
Absorbed in holy meditations,
While kneeling at Immanuel's feet,
He heard the voice divine repeat,
"Go preach my gospel to all nations."

The sainted hero's race is run;
We read with tears the touching story,

THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

Of how, by daily penance done
And Christian faith and works, he won
  At last the martyr's crown of glory.

The years, with their remorseless hands,
  Have ground to dust the white-walled missions;
And, in the place of fruitful lands,
Have left us but the drifting sands,
  The broken shrines, the old traditions.

THE ROSE AND THE THORN

A YOUTH, once walking in the early dawn,
Espied a red rose blushing on the lawn.

Its simple beauty caught his fickle sight,
Its subtle perfume filled him with delight.

With eager, selfish haste, that self-same morn,
He plucked the rose, unmindful of the thorn.

Alas, alack-a-day! his joy has fled;
Only the thorn remains, the rose is dead.

A MONOGRAPH

ANNO DOMINI eighteen thirty-one,
In the third year of wedlock, there was born
To John and Josephine an only son.
Thus much was written on his birthday morn.
Swathed, nursed and christened, as befits the heir
Of honest yeomen, he waxed stout and fair;
Until at length, well grown, he quit the fold.
A few strong headlines and the rest is told.
A mother's hopes, a mother's fears,
A schoolboy's triumphs and his tears,
A dear girl's love, a stolen kiss,
A mutual vow for good or ill,
A year or more of wedded bliss,
A new-made grave beyond the hill.
The bitter pang, the life-long pain,
The transient pleasures of an hour,
The shifting tides of loss and gain,
The bootless strife for place and power.
He joined the ranks where brave men fell,
He saw the battle's lurid glare,
He heard the scream of shot and shell,
The rolling drums, the trumpets blare.

THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

Amid the windrows of the dead
I knelt to-day beside his bed.
He died as men have died before,
A spent wave on a barren shore.
We storm the fortress, and we fail;
We dream of eagle-flights, and fall.
I have writ down an o'er-true tale;
Alas! God help us—that is all.

LONG TOM

PASSING to-day on the crowded street,
A character quaint I chanced to meet,
Dressed in an obsolete, primitive way—
Erewhile the mode, but just now not au fait—
By a bundle of blankets freighted down,
Ill at ease in the ways of the town,
Vacantly looking at this and that
Under rim of his limpsy hat;
Bent of body and shaky of limb,
Grizzled of locks, and gaunt and grim,
A wistful look in his filmy eye,
Purposeless, hopeless sauntering by.

This singular somebody, I opine,
Is an antique fossil of Forty-nine;
Albeit a taciturn man he seems,
His babble will flow like the mountain streams,
If you simply suggest a "social smile";
He takes whiskey straight, remarking meanwhile
That he finds since he had the rheumatiz
That it don't do to take water in his;
Then follow, perforce, the trail of his talk,
It leads over somewhere to some North Fork,

THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

Thence up the river to So-and-so's Bar,
And he will tell you that "thar was whar,"
Just under the grass-roots, one day he found
Pockets of nuggets and dust by the pound.

Events are the milestones which mark time's
lapse,
Whereby he recounts his haps and mishaps.
'Twas the summer that Texas Bill was drowned,
Or the gulch whar the ten-pound lump was
found,
Or the day when Page & Bacon busted,
Or the time when Dave got up and dusted.
The year of the Frazier River stampede—
The dogondest humbug he ever seed.
He's only waiting to make his pile—
In coal-oil parlance they say, "strike ile"—
And then he'll go back to the States, you bet,
And see the old gal and the chicks; and yet,
He hasn't heard for many a year
From Sal and the babies; 'tis somewhat queer;
But then he reckons the times is tight,
And Sal never was much on the write.
Poor driveler! 'tis years since Sal was laid
In dreamless sleep 'neath the willows' shade.

And your babies must men and women be,
Drifting about on the open sea.
Better go down in the stormy strife,
Than strand on the reefs of a useless life.

IN THE SWIM

I WAS struck with the warmth of her greeting,
When she gave me her finger tips;
And I heard with surprise, at our meeting,
The laugh and the chaff of her lips.

I thought her as cool as December,
Whenever we met heretofore,
But now I had found her an ember,
With smiles and with small-talk galore.

She talked of the fun and the fashion,
She talked of the dullness of town,
She talked of the play and its passion,
She talked of her new Paris gown.

THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

And then, with a queer little gesture,
  She said it was laid on the shelf;
Though sad was the hue of her vesture,
  She seemed in high feather herself.

My man, in the meantime, was walking
  My team on the asphalt below,
And I asked could we not do our talking
  On the road to the "Cliff?" Would she go?

Ah no, she was housed for the season,
  She thought it bad form to go out;
Then told me, sub rosa, the reason—
  Her Uncle had died of the gout.

As she passed me the wine and the biscuit,
  She said it might do after dark,
And if I thought best, she would risk it
  And go for a spin in the Park.

I may be as dull as a booby,
  But I thought, as we stood in the hall,
She has heard of dad's strike in the "Ruby,"
  And thinks me a catch, after all.

"TINS TO MEND!"

"TINS to mend!" How he swings along,
That curious man with his tattered clothes,
And his swarthy face and his crooked nose,
And that nasal chant wherever he goes,
Quaint burlesque of a song.

The vagrant life he leads, who knows?
Through the highways and byways, out and in,
Searching early and late for worn-out tin;
The housemaid declares that he smells of gin—
He don't seem like a rose.

As I watched him that autumn day,
I marvelled if perchance some biting scorn,
Or a blighted hope, or a life forlorn,
Had not changed the gold of his early morn
Into an ashen gray.

And where fell first his childhood's glance—
Whether by Vineland's hilled and castled stream,
Or where the Bosphor's storied waters gleam,
Or Adriatic's thousand islands seem
The haunts of old romance.

THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

"Tins to mend!" was the weird refrain
Which fell on my ear as I strolled along,
Farther and farther from the city's throng,
Till by an humble cot he ceased his song,
From toil set free again.

The door ajar, I saw him kissed;
A little child, with sweet, endearing cry,
Sprang to his arms, love beaming from her eye;
Mine own were somehow wet—I can't tell why—
It might have been the mist.

The good God keeps us in His sight—
Sure, if in pleasant paths our footsteps fall,
Or if our dead hopes lie beneath the pall,
That joy and sorrow come alike to all,
That morn succeeds the night.

"MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN"

THE Manchu gave no heed to war's alarms,
But drove his flocks afield, and pitched his tent;
Till Genghis Kahn had called his hordes to arms,
And by one blow the Middle Kingdom rent.
Leaving a trail of blood and fire behind,
He neither stays his onward march, nor waits,
Till even Europe stands aghast to find
This Tartar Chieftain at her very gates.

Let Celt and Gaul and Muscovite beware,
Lest in their lawless lust and greed, some day
They wake the sleeping tiger in his lair,
And see the Yellow Peril turn at bay.
Justice may drop the scales, and draw the sword;
A Menace stands behind you one and all;
Then hear and heed the grave potential word
Belshazzar saw upon his palace wall.

AU REVOIR

TO J. D. R.

BOON comrade, in a hundred brilliant bouts,
Where wit with wit played carte and tierce full fast,
With eager thrust and parry to the last,
We've hailed thee victor knight with pealing shouts.

And in life's ups and downs and ins and outs,
When weaklings wait and folly stands aghast,
Fail not, Sir Knight, to prick, as in the past,
The thin pretense of shams, the fear of doubts.

'Tis well betimes, in our prosaic land,
To conjure up the days of old romance,
When simple faith was more than sordid might.
And if so be the hour and age demand,
We look to see thee, armed with sword and lance,
Go forth to strike for God and for the right.

TO RAPHAEL WEILL

(Read at a dinner tendered him by citizens of San Francisco, upon which occasion he was invested with the Cross of the Legion of Honor by the Consul General of France.)

IN glad response I strike my dormant lyre,
To give thee greeting loyal friend and true;
And as old mem'ries flood my soul anew,
I fain would wake once more its fervid fire.

The boon companions of thy foster-land,
Now standing here on life's meridian crest,
Exult to see that cross upon thy breast,
Proud token of the open heart and hand.

Not in the realm of letters or of art,
Nor on the tented field like knight of old,
By some brave deed hast thou thy guerdon won;
But here where thou hast nobly borne thy part,
This honor comes, with blessings manifold,
To crown thy life Dear Heart, for good deeds done.

THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

A RED-LETTER DAY

AN hour of toil and strife, and we are dead.
Life is a lie, a bitter lie, I said,
And death itself is only dust to dust.
All men are mad indeed with venal lust,
The toiling galley slaves of cent per cent;
There is no cure, alas! for all these ills.
In such a mood I folded up my tent
In sooth and sought the freedom of the hills.
And from the couch of pine boughs where I lie,
As one by one the dark-winged shadows fly,
I watch the birth of this auspicious day.
There is a quickening in the womb of night,
A fringe of dawn and then the flush of light.
Slowly the sable curtain rolls away.
Let there be light, as God Himself ordains.
A beacon lit by His divine decree,
Sign-manual that law and order reigns,
Flashes from space athwart the land and sea.
Full-orbed the prince of light and life is born,
His royal banners flush the eastern skies;
I shake the spell of slumber from my eyes
And hie me forth elate to meet the morn.
And lo! from peak to peak, on either hand,

The new-born daylight ripples o'er the land.
All hail, Aurora, herald of the sun!
As o'er the peaks thy coursers dash apace,
Behold the pale-faced stars die one by one,
And earth, awaking from the cool embrace
Of night, reveals to us her rosy face.
Although the impress of repose remains,
The seal of sleep is broken; to the ear
Come palpitating waves of sound; I hear
The life-tide ebb and flow in nature's veins,
Tones inarticulate, the stir of wings,
The mellow murmur of earth's viewless springs.
An amber halo glorifies the hills;
And as the owl on muffled wing retires,
One half-awakened minstrel lightly trills
An overture for all the sleeping choirs.
The countless choristers will join ere long
In one exultant avalanche of song.
Come forth, O weary denizen of town,
Bathe in the sunshine, breathe the balmy air;
Shake off the toils of traffic and lay down
The life-long burden which you seem to bear.
Wait not for death to break thy prison bars,
And send thy ransomed soul to paradise;
But seek betimes the free glad life beneath the stars.

THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

For thee the gods have spread a rich repast;
Ambrosia falls like manna from the skies
And nectar flows in every wayside rill.
Come forth and break, for once, thy life-long fast,
And from this gracious bounty take thy fill.
With eager step I climb the ridge to seek
A highland glade beneath the purple peak.
There all the shining day, from dawn till dark,
The wary birds beneath the covert hide.
Meanwhile my dogs exult with bound and bark
And beat the tangled brake from side to side.
Borne onward by the day's advancing light,
The waves of warmth roll down the rocky height,
And long before the ardent sun has kissed
The humid lowlands with his earliest beam,
I catch the gleam and sparkle of the stream
Between the fading folds of silver mist.
From nook and nest, when full-fledged day is born,
What swarms of life come forth to greet the morn.

The drowsy hum of the bee is heard
And the locust's clanging cry,
And a flashing gem in the form of a bird
On its jeweled wings darts by.
The linnet sings in the lowly hedge
And the raven croaks above;
The lizard basks on the crannied ledge
And the hawk swoops down on the dove.
The dragon-fly like a fiend is seen
Poised in mid-air on his gauze-like wings;
And beetles and moths in gold and green,
And wasps with their shining rings.
Spiders are weaving their filmy snares,
And bees are hoarding their honeyed stores;
While emmets, busy with household cares,
Trail over the forest floors.
Butterflies creep from the silken pall
In the tomb where the chrysalis dies;
And through brooding leaves the sunbeams fall
And luminous columns of light arise.
In these shafts of light, from morn to night,
The midges reel in their amorous flight.
The marmots chatter, the magpies scold,
The quails are piping along the slopes;
And down in the heart of the dusky wold
The owl sits alone in his crypt and mopes.

THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

Through the reedy marsh the bitterns wade,
And along the marge the herons stalk;
The rabbit scurries across the glade,
And over the cañon wheels the hawk.

I skirt along the mountain's bosky flank
And find primeval parks of pines and firs.
Between the shoulders of projecting spurs
These lordly cones are marshaled rank on rank.
In the ambrosial gloom dark aisles of pines
Lead out to sunny glades and laughing waterways,
Where moss-enameled trunks and trailing vines
Hedge in the bud and bloom of vernal days.
Down the cool distance of the long arcade
The white azalea's snowflakes fleck the way;
And in the shelter of the fostering shade
I pluck one hooded violet of May.
The fragrance of the flower-embroidered mead
Fills all the dreamy air with fresh delight.
Undaunted, from some far sequestered height,
The doe leads here her spotted fawns to feed;
And here the bee and bird and butterfly
Find spread for them a floral feast on high.

Borne on the tides of air, now faint, now
clear,
The roar of waters breaks upon my ear.
A shower of brook-notes floods the perfect day,
Where sun-rays pierce the meshes of the mist
An arch of splendor spans the falling spray.
Haply some Naiad haunts the stream; I list
The sibylistic whisper of the leaves;
A Faun seems grieving when the fir-tree grieves,
And in the pine's pathetic monotone
Methinks I hear the sad-voiced Ariel moan.
Drenched by the rain of ceaseless waterfalls,
Moist-footed mosses scale the dripping walls.
Here, wary of the angler's tempting hook,
The lithe and spotted leopard of the brook
Lurks for his prey in every shaded nook.
With ruffled crest and sharp, discordant cries,
The feathered fisher flits from limb to limb.
Into the fret and foam the ouzel flies,
Above the nether pool the swallows skim.
This is the gate-way—and on either hand
The fragments of colossal cliffs. I climb
From rock to rock, until at last I stand
Upon the ragged battlements of time.
The earth's historian is death; and here,

THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

From age to age, are stamped the records
of the past.
Man and his handiwork may disappear,
But these shall last as long as time shall last.
In the archaic years the glacier's fangs
Laid bare these granite ribs, and ground to
dust
The concrete layers of the lava crust.
Rents, riven by the earthquake, mark the pangs
Of nature and reveal to us the throes
Of earth. These rounded domes, these cloud-
capped spires,
Congealed and moulded into grand repose,
Bespeak the fury of volcanic fires.
Down the long pathway of the ages time
Has wrought with magic touch, transmuting all
The fearful splendors of creation's prime.
And as the aeons rolled away, the pall
Was lifted from the sea and land, and life
Was born of death, the elemental strife
Was hushed, the Voice Divine was heard, peace
reigned,
And beauty blossomed in the earth. Ordained
By some fixed law, the seasons come and go.
The wind-sown seeds in desert places sleep.
Until the sunbeams kiss the dust, when lo!

The hidden germs are stirred, the heavens weep,
And life triumphant springs from last year's tomb.
Into the crannied rocks the lichens creep,
Along the crater's rim the roses bloom.
The streams, from winter's icy chain set free
And fed by falling rain and melting snow,
Rush down the ice-worn water-ways and flow
In melted music to the summer sea.
Within the mountain's lap enshrined,
And where the falling waters wake
A thousand echoes from the cliffs, I find
A rock imprisoned lake;
Locked in a glacier's tomb, it lies asleep,
Belted by firs and fringed with water-plants;
Upon its shining disk the sunbeams dance
And from its polished lip the rapids leap.
Seen through the water's cool eclipse, behold,
Suspended in its calm, unruffled breast,
The hanging outlines of the dusky wold
And the inverted headlands of the crest.
Lured by the wild seclusion of the place,
Its savage grandeur and its tender grace;
Lulled by the ripple of the wind and tide,
The incense and the song of birds, I bide
A blissful moment; and as I depart

THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

I turn from thee, O tranquil lake, and hide
A picture and a poem in my heart.
Three hours, at least, since dawn and here we are;
Ten miles, o'er mount and moor, as flies the crow,
The skulking covey now is near at hand;
My dogs have snuffed the battle from afar,
How quick they catch the scent, how staunch they stand,
Steady, my faithful Bess—to-ho—to-ho!
And even as I speak the grey cock springs,
Bursts through the tangled brake with whir of wings
And drops, dead bird, upon the heath below.
Once more, my mottled beauties, left and right
Two well-directed shots have stopped your flight;
The heart does penance, but the hand will kill.
Good dog—dead bird—go seek—dead bird, I say.
By Jove, another, and—another still,
Steady, my braves, there's gallant sport to-day.
And so, on rapid wings, the hours go by;
I little heed the moments as they fly.

The covert we have beaten o'er and o'er
Have flushed a score of birds, at least, and more.
High noon is blazing on the purple crest;
Call in the panting dogs, I fain would rest.
The fevered land lies throbbing in the heat;
And I will seek some quiet cloister-shade,
Some leafy mosque with arabesque inlaid.
'Tis but a step to yonder still retreat,
Where screens of silken canopies invite
To cool siestas in the chastened light.
There are no frowning gates to bar the way;
I hear no warder's challenge as I pass;
Latticed with leaves and carpeted with grass,
Its sylvan doors are open to the day.
I cross the threshold of this leaf-line nest,
And find myself at once a welcome guest.
No host receives me with a smiling face,
But rare civilities have no surcease.
I am the sole possessor of the place,
To break my bread and drink my wine in peace.
My dogs beside me, couched upon the sward,
I sit me down to lunch like any lord.
There is no sauce like appetite, I ween;
And I have dined and wined enough to be aware

THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

That brimming cups and lengthy bills of fare
Will not disperse the vapors of the spleen;
For while amid the salvos of the feast
A man may half forget his galling chain,
Whene'er this brief oblivion has ceased
There comes, as recompense, an afterpain.
And so, to fly the lure of tempting ills,
I take betimes to tent-life on the hills.
There we obey the mandate, "Kill and eat,"
Because no meagre diet will suffice
When health and hunger by the camp-fire meet.
First, from the hanging haunch a tender slice
Broiled on the glowing embers to a turn,
And then, impaled where blazing fagots burn,
A bird or two, by timely shot brought down,
Larded with bits of bacon, crisp and brown.
What if the fare be plain, the service crude,
We have a wealth of appetite at least;
And last of all, to cheer the solitude,
A cup of camp-brewed coffee, amber-hued,
Which is the crowning glory of the feast.
And then, at night, the song, the laugh, the jest,
The camp-fire tales related with a zest:
How in the jungle someone chanced to meet

The shaggy monster with the shuffling feet,
And how discretion sought a safe retreat.
Hard by the stream, beside the antlered oak,
The wolf beneath my waistcoat fast asleep,
From my post-prandial pipe the coils of smoke
Unwind and vanish in the upper deep.
Unmindful of the pendent sword, mayhap,
In dreamy lassitude at ease I lie
Upon the moorland's aromatic lap,
And scan the vast abyss of shoreless sky.
Away, upon the outmost verge of sight,
The livelong day, at that far height,
An eagle, resting on his wings,
Wheels round and round in circling rings.
In pensive mood I turn my half-closed eyes
Across the hazy lowlands, leagues away,
Where dim ethereal ramparts, vast and gray,
Rise, Alps on Alps, against the vaulted skies.
I mark the splendid sweep of plain below,
The miles on miles of undulating hills,
The darker gorges of the upland rills,
The sinuous curves where tree-fringed rivers flow.
Mid-summer days have tanned the valley's hide,

And draped the mountain's corrugated side
In dappled robes of gold and green and dun.
Where heat-waves wimple in the noonday sun,
White farmsteads nestle under brooding trees
And gleam like white sails on the wrinkled seas.
Stout-hearted nomads, from far distant lands,
Have pitched their tents and lit their camp-fires here;
And though the thirsty fields are brown and sere,
An ample harvest waits on willing hands.
Time was whene'er the ardent sun rode by,
May blushed the while and breathed a fragrant sigh.
Then came the passion of imperial June,
As morn is followed by the fervid noon,
And then the tawny splendor of July.
Metallic lustres brighten as the summer wanes,
The sky itself is like a sea of glass,
The snow-fed streams are links of silver chains,
The rounded hills are waves of molten brass.
Where erst the earth was clad in rainbow hues

And gilded insects wrapped themselves in fire,
Now Flora dies upon her kindled pyre,
And all the pageantry of death ensues.
In the still half-light of the nearer shade,
Where sunbeams filter through the leaves, behold!
The summer's pall, the autumn's masquerade,
The dead year's cast-off garments turned to gold.
Here I escape the world's discordant noise,
The burden of the nights, which bring no rest;
No palms appeal to me, no toilsome quest
For wealth or fame; in blissful equipoise
I lie content on nature's tranquil breast.
The calm repose of perfect peace abounds.
I hear the breeze coquetting with the trees,
The hum of myriad wings, the drone of bees,
And fill my heart with these delightful sounds.
Lulled by the woodland's weird aeolian lyre,
And the delicious babble of the streams,
I fold my listless hands and dream my dreams,
Unvexed by doubt, unruffled by desire.
No longer worldly wise, I hold a sweet
Communion with the bee and bird and flower.
Speech fails and falters when I would repeat

THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

The wondrous harmonies of this glad hour.
I know, and only know, that as I kneel
In silent ecstasy upon the sod,
I listen with my inmost soul, and feel
No discords in the orchestras of God.
The banners which at morn assailed the east
Now trail in burnished pomp along the west.
The vesper song of birds has well-nigh ceased,
And tranquil nature lulls herself to rest.
Already twilight lurks within the wold,
So swift the hours have flown on silken wings.
The waning daylight sows its dust of gold,
And on the crest a fitful splendor flings.
As rapid hours complete the ripened day,
The new moon's sickle reaps the yellow sheaf.
Whate'er betide of good or ill, alway
My book of life has one illumined leaf.

THE DEATH OF AL HÂRITH

AL HAMADÂNI, wonder of his time,
Relates how Hârith, blessed with goodly store,
The owner of a hundred steeds and more,
Grown overwise and restless in his prime,
Set sail upon the desert seas of yore.
From Irak to Damascus, bold of wing,
He braves the tongue of flame, the simoon's blast;
Backward the iron hoofs of his coursers fling
The dust of travel, till he stands at last
Beside the blessèd gate of Illah, where
The shining city sits beneath the palms.
His face towards Mecca first, he bows in prayer,
As all good Moslems should, bestows his alms,
And then betakes him to the bath; then pays
His service to the Kadi, to express,
With due decorum, all the grave excess
Of Oriental greeting; length of days,
Increase of store—for thus, in Eastern lands,
With gracious speech, the Moslem greets his guest.
And so the son of Irak folds his hands
And sits him down by Syrian streams to rest.

THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

To Oriental ears no sound so sweet
As sound of running waters; while he makes
The pilgrimage of life in dust and heat,
He fondly hopes, whene'er his soul awakes
In Paradise, to realize his dreams
Of singing bulbuls and of babbling streams.

Damascus, gold within and grime without,
With here and there a narrow, tortuous street,
Through which the living tides flow in and out.
We catch a glimpse of palms above the walls,
And in the transient hush of hurrying feet
We hear the tinkling tones of waterfalls.
Within the portals, sheltered from the heat
When sultry days succeed to lustrous dawns,
Are cool arcades where shining waters run,
And tesselated courts, and terraced lawns,
And marble fountains, flashing in the sun.
'Twas much the same a thousand years ago.
The dreamy Moslem life pulsed to and fro
In the same sensual round, when Hârith found
Its mosques and market places crescent-crowned.
A mart of splendor by a sea of sand,
Her khans were filled with wares from every land:

Spices and gums, frankincense, musk, and myrrh,
Amber and coral from the Indian seas;
Brocades and arabesques from Nishampur,
Inwrought with gold and silver filigrees;
Embroidered silks and satins, rare perfumes,
Rubies from Ava, pearls from Hindustan;
Cambrics and tapestries from Persian looms,
Caftans from Fez, and shawls from Khorasan.
Rivers of wine and oil ran down the streets,
While, tossed and travel-stained, the desert fleets,
With freights from Egypt, Khiva and Cathay,
Beside her sacred gates at anchor lay.

Hot is the heart of youth; what wonder, then,
As in his veins the streams of molten lava leap,
That he of Irak should, like other men,
Forget the words of wisdom and, despite
The warnings of the Prophet, fall asleep
In some forbidden palace of delight?
Meanwhile the moons of Syria waxed and waned;
And he, enchanted first and then enchained,
A willing slave in silken meshes lay

THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

Where broad-browed nymphs with sombrous
waves of hair
And lustrous eyes that shunned the light of
day,
Like Venus veiled in phantom robes of spray,
Were idly swaying in the perfumed air.
Change follows change in all material things;
The dawn gives place to day, the day to night.
Our treasures, as the Prophet says, have wings
And, like the mists of morning, take their
flight.
Love tires of its delicious pain, and power
Is but the fleeting phantom of an hour.
Perhaps the still small voice by night was
heard,
Which comes to us unbidden and unsought;
Perhaps the ghost of loves forsaken stirred
Once more the turbid current of his thought.
If vows were made, or expiation done,
The text does not disclose, nor can we tell;
But this we know, he broke the Circean spell,
And swore by Allah that the morrow's sun
Should see him on his way. And when the dawn
With rosy fingers had in part withdrawn
The mantle of the night, he stole away,
Leaving the dancers at their revels still,

And with his camel-drivers waited till
The earth unveiled before the full-orbed day.
Beyond the gates, beside the sacred well,
In abject squalor, on his leathern mat
Abu Ben Zayd, the prince of beggars, sat,
And told his wondrous tales and sought to sell
His amulets: "This, from the holy shrine,
Will guard thee, son of Islam, from thy foes;
And this—peace be with thee and thine—
Will comfort thy distress and soothe thy woes;
And this—if thou shouldst chance to go
astray—
Will lead thee safely back." "Upon my word,"
Al Hârith said, "I do believe
Thou liest; and as the spider weaves his web
for prey,
So thou dost weave these pretexts to deceive."
The Prophet in the seventh heaven heard
The impious scoff, the dervish bowed his head.
"Illah il' Allah!" God is great, he said.

A steel-blue sky above, and on either hand,
As far as the eye can reach, a sea of sand.
In all of the great white space no sound or
sight;

THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

Only the glare of day, only the hush of night.
Curses have followed like wolves as they march
Day after day, under the arch
Of the pitiless sky; no joy and no rest,
For omens are thick in the thin white air;
And the camel-drivers forget to jest
When Fear looks into the face of Care.
In the door of his tent Al Hârith sits,
And his face wears a troubled look, for lo!
On the rim of the desert a shadow flits
And it seems like the cloud of the coming foe.

He hears their hoof-beats nearer and more
near;
No hope in flight; and paralyzed with fear,
He calls on Allah, but he calls in vain.
Across the wide expanse of arid plain
Full half a hundred horsemen dash;
And foremost, where the circling sabres flash,
Behold! the face of him who sought to sell
The amulets beside the sacred well.

Ten centuries attest the force of this
One sabre stroke.
In all the eastern lands

Abu Ben Zayd is held in high repute,
Because he fixed the faith in amulets
And gave to every canting mendicant,
From Mecca to Stamboul, this poor pretext
To make a merchandise of piety.
The Prophet says: "Give ear, O sons of men!
Obey the precepts of the faith, and then
Accept the preordained decrees of fate."
"Illah il' Allah!" Only God is great.

THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

DOM PERIGNON

(The Discoverer of Champagne)

CROSSING the purple hills of Epernay,
Hard by the little thorp of Haut Villier,
Just where the winding river blocks the way,
A gray old ruin you may chance to see,
Long since the famous Abbey of Saint Pierre,
But erst the castle-keep of chivalry;
Where broad-arched portals led to columned courts,
With terraces, and lawns, and blazoned halls,
And list for jousts of arms, and manly sports;
While, pendent from its battlemented walls,
The oriflamme of France flashed on the sight.
Fresh from his conquests in the Holy Land,
His casque and corselet cast aside, the knight
Bent here above his lady's jeweled hand;
And here, of old, did valiant men at arms
Their wassails and their drinking bouts prolong
From dark till dawn—instead of war's alarms,
The gust of laughter and the gush of song.
Along these corridors their iron heels rang,
And here, on festive nights and tilting days,

His harp in hand, the wandering minstrel sang
His madrigals and tender roundelays.
Here, too, the jester in his cap and bells,
With licensed leer, assailed pretense and sham,
Played carte and tierce with mediæval swells
And stabbed them with a well-turned epigram.
But knight and minstrel and my lady fair
Gave place to cowled monks. Some one has said:
"The pen is mightier than the sword, and prayer
More potent than the monarch's crownèd head,"
And so it seems; for, like a king of kings,
The priest became the potentate of France—
Held court and crown and state in leading strings,
Made war and peace, yet never lifted lance.

Who could foretell the change that was to be
From rocky caves to grand cathedral aisles,
And from the manger to the Papal See?
Beneath the domes of consecrated piles
A treasure trove has been preserved for us;

For music, marble, canvas could, in part,
Repeat the story of the cross, and thus
The Church became the very shrine of art.
At first, the monk could worship in his cell,
Without the ritual of form and cant,
The burning taper and the tinkling bell,
The swinging censor and the solemn chant.
He gave his life to prayer and holy thought;
And when the enemy of souls enticed,
With scourge and fast, on bended knees, besought
The Virgin Mother and the risen Christ.
Not so our brotherhood of jovial fame.
They ate with toothsome zest the rich repast;
Were bacchanals in fact and monks in name,
And loved the feast much better than the fast.
They cried: "Give us this day our daily bread,"
Which meant fat capon for monastic greed;
And then they gathered tithes, waxed fat, and fed
The hinds on husks of faith and crumbs of creed.
But who will dare to say they were not wise,
If for themselves they killed the fatted calf?

Not I, at least; for I have learned that half
The fine-spun theories which men devise
Are only snares, in short, for catching flies.
The monastery lands were deftly tilled;
From year to year the Friars leased the soil,
Received therefor the lion's share, and filled
The Abbey bins with corn and wine and oil.
Dom Perignon, purveyor of the vaults,
With reputation reaching to our day—
Like Sancho Panza's uncle, so they say—
Could tell at once the virtues and the faults
Of every drop of wine produced; and knew
The kinds of grape, the hillsides where they grew,
The modicum of sun and rain and dew,
With just the proper mixing to impart
The flavor which the epicures require.
His brain, perhaps, was sluggish, but his heart
Was like his wine—full of imprisoned fire.
Who knows the fermentation of desire,
Which fumed and fretted day and night, unseen,
Beneath the Friar's unkempt gabardine?

Some golden years gone by ere youth had flown,

THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

And ere youth's oaten follies had been sown,
In that gay capital of La Belle France,
It was my wont, at times, to stroll about
The haunts where madcap-students sing and shout,
And where with gay grisettes they dance.
In an old café by the sluggish Seine,
Two close converging streets between,
Where these wild roisterers oft did congregate,
His portrait hangs, or there it hung of late.
In half a dozen dashes of the pen
I'll try to sketch the likeness of the man—
That is, I'll do the best I can;
And if I fail, why then—what then?
With some small share of tact and less of art,
And more of that old Saxon gift called knack,
As in charades, I'll improvise a part
And dress it from my store of bric-a-brac.
And first, the part most prominent, in fine,
I'll take this Arab wine-skin filled with wine
And hang it here upon the smoky wall
Above these Roman sandals; over all
I'll drape this Friar's frowsy gown,
And last, this masker's face—a full-orbed moon—

And the sketch is done, from the shaven crown
To the soles of the sandal-shoon.

Now, I'll be bound, you thought of course to see
Some thin æsthetic saint on prayers intent,
And not this counterfeit of piety.
Small doubt, indeed, but he must needs repent—
In fact, but for his priestly robe, I fear
He would be deemed an arrant sinner,
Far less concerned about his vows austere
Than for the flavor of his dinner.
But then, all men are prone to sin, you know,
And monks, at best, are only men; and so
They wrap themselves in sackcloth, while they line
Their ample gowns with capon and with wine.
Concede that to the priestly robe there clings
An odor of sanctity, if you will;
We find that an angel without his wings
Is only a mortal in dishabille.
A truce to dull polemics. You shall see
That not by constant prayer and self-restraint

THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

Did Padre Perignon become the saint
Of social Sybarites, like you and me.
But thus it came to pass one day
A cask of vapid Epernay—
Which he betimes had fortified
With syrup and with eau-devie—
Made mad with effervescing pride,
Burst its frail bonds exultingly.
Some drops fell on the Friar's lips,
His hand into the flood he dips,
And lo, a miracle! He sips
The drink divine, with wonder quaffs
A living wine that leaps and laughs.
Pale, phosphorescent spark that lights
A sensuous flame refined and rare.
All hail, O Monk! thy neophytes
Are demigods—or think they are.
Look to thy laurels, Bacchus! crown anew
Thy cups with garlands; for thy wine has caught
A rarer spirit and a richer hue
From this fat Friar's accidental thought.

We shed no hackneyed, ill-timed tears
Upon an old monastic tomb,
But pour libations on a shrine.

His name from out the cloistered gloom,
Borne on the tossing tide of wine,
Drifts down the cycle of the years.
Amid the salvos of the feast
Let all good bacchanals, at least,
In silence toast the jocund priest.

A FACE

I MET a maiden on the street—
  I knew another long ago—
And as she passed with tripping feet,
  I looked, and lo!
I saw the face I used to know.

The winsome smile, so rare and sweet,
  The downcast eyes, the cheeks aglow;
Ah me, it made my old heart beat,
  Though well I know
That on her grave the daisies grow.

TRANSLATIONS

ALONE

(From the German)

THE night wind is lifting its wings once more
And sighing and soughing among the reeds;
The brambles are thick and my feet are sore,
And the path is dim and my poor heart bleeds.

I hear from the tower, like the knell of woe,
The clang of the clock, with its one, two, three;
Out into the night and the storm I go,
For no firelight gleams on the hearth for me.

The heavens are dark and the fog drops down,
And my heart is weak, which was once so strong;
I can see the far-off lights of the town,
But my feet are worn and the way is long.

Oh, if, when it comes to the end at last,
After night, and silence, and vain surmise,
I could find you waiting, as in the past,
With your smiling lips and your beaming eyes!

THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

ROSETTE

(After Béranger)

IN this, the heyday of your youth,
  How can you sit and prate, my dear,
Of love and faith to one, forsooth,
  Whose forty years are in the sear?
Time was when my fond heart could pay
  Its vows to one obscure grisette;
Ah me! if only I, to-day,
  Could love you as I loved Rosette.

Your grand equipage serves to show
  The silks and diamonds which you wear;
Rosette, Rosette, her cheeks aglow,
  Tripped by with roses in her hair.
Her eyes, despite my jealous "Nay,"
  Provoked a word from all we met;
Ah, me! if only I, to-day,
  Could love you as I loved Rosette.

In your boudoir, with satin lined,
  The mirrors show your smiling face;
In her wee glass I used to find
  The image of a new-born Grace.

No curtains barred the morning ray,
And stars peeped in when sun had set;
Ah, me! if only I, to-day,
Could love you as I loved Rosette.

Your wit and fancy flash, until
The poet's heart is somehow stirred;
I do not blush to own it, still
Rosette could scarcely read a word.
Her simple speech sufficed alway
To tell her love, and yet, and yet,
Ah, me! if only I, to-day,
Could love you as I loved Rosette.

Her charms were less than yours, God wot,
She may have loved me more, although
I must confess her eyes had not
The fire of passion yours can show;
But then she had, I fain must say,
My youth, which I perhaps regret;
Ah, me! if only I, to-day,
Could love you as I loved Rosette.

CARMEN

(From the French of Théophile Gautier)

DARK rings encircle her gypsy eyes,
  And her figure is scrawny and thin;
Her hair is black as the midnight skies,
  And the devil has tanned her skin.

Men rave about her, but women swear
  She is ugly as ugly can be;
They even hint in Toledo there
  That the bishop chants mass at her knee.

Her piquant plainness may have, who knows?
  A grain of salt from the self-same seas,
Whence nude, erewhile, to the crest she rose
  A racy Venus to tempt and tease.

THE KING HIMSELF FOREMOST OF ALL

(From the German of N. v. Strachwitz)

KING STYRBJÖRN sailed down to the Sästne strand;
He swore he would seize on the Swedish land;
Then swords and shields on the deck were flung,
And into the water the heroes sprung,
The King himself foremost of all.

King Styrbjörn said: "Lo! the vultures draw nigh,
It is ours to fight, and never to fly;
That none be tempted hereafter to turn,
Behind us to-day our ships we will burn;
The ship of the King first of all."

King Styrbjörn cast first the flaming brand,
Red gleamed the ocean and red the land;
And when the fire flickered and died at last,
Each hero laid hold of his spear full fast,
The King himself foremost of all.

THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

They met by Tyriswall, fierce was the fight,
The day was stormy, but silent the night;
None turned to the ships, none turned to the coast,
Down went the hero and down went the host,
The King himself foremost of all.

FLAMINCA

(From the German of Emanuel von Geibel)

NO more her dark brown limbs are seen
  As in the dance they madly whirl;
No more she strikes the tambourine,
  Flaminca blithe, the Gypsy Girl.

A scarlet fillet bound her hair,
  In silken shoes her twinkling feet;
But now she sleeps, the Wild Rose, where
  The tangled boughs above her meet.

Bide not the hawthorn-tree beside!
  Give heed, ye lads, if ye are wise!
For flames leap forth, since she has died,
  From out the earth where now she lies.

'Tis said her form sometimes appears
  When odors on the night air stir,
And with her longing eyes she sears
  The heart of him who looks on her.

REMEMBRANCE

(From the German of Heine)

WHAT wilt thou, mournful vision dear and olden;
I feel thy very breath and gaze on thee;
I am by thee with doleful eyes beholden;
I know thee, and alas, thou knowest me.

I am a way-worn man, my limbs a-weary
Have lost their strength, my heart is scorched and sere;
Care weighs me down, my days are dark and dreary;
It was not thus when first I found thee here.

In haughty strength I left the home seclusion
To tramp the wide world o'er, and would assault
The gates celestial, in my mad delusion,
And tear the very stars from Heaven's vault.

Frankfort doth foster fools and knaves, I know
it,
And yet she gave—for this I love her well—
Many good Kaisers and our greatest poet;
And there I found my love where she did
dwell.

I strolled along the Ziel amid the bustle;
There was a fair, with all its fuss and feud;
The motley throng went by with rush and
rustle,
And I looked idly on in dreaming mood.

I saw her there, with shy delighted wonder,
And watched her swaying form that self-
same hour;
Her happy eyes, the long dark lashes under,
Attracted me with such unwonted power.

Through street and market then I followed
after,
Until we reached a cottage by and by,
The sweet one turned, and with a flash of
laughter
She slipped into the house, and so did I.

THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

The aunt was vile, would even sell for money
This maiden flower that bloomed so sweetly there;
Although the child gave me herself, so sunny,
Without a single sordid thought, I swear.

I have met other women than the Muses,
And know the varnished face, the artful sigh;
Hers was no breast to heave whene'er it chooses,
And in her eyes, by Heaven, there was no lie.

And she was fair, far fairer than is painted
That foam-begotten Goddess of the sea;
Perchance she was the being well-nigh sainted
Who in my boyhood's dreams appeared to me.

I knew it not and it was all unheeded,
Some spell entranced me with, I know not what;
Perchance the bliss I longed for and most needed
Was in my arms, and yet I knew it not.

And she was fair, far fairer in her anguish,
When after three days' blissful dream I fain

Would leave the heart I rested on to languish,
Because the old mood drove me forth again.

With her dishevelled hair about her flying
And mute and wild appeals, her hands she wrung;
Then at my feet she cast herself and, lying,
Burst into tears as to my knees she clung.

Ah God! her blood, would I have seen her never,
My spur had caught her hair upon the floor;
I tore myself away and lost forever
My darling child, and never saw her more.

The mood is gone, upon her face I ponder,
That face, where'er I am, appears to me;
Poor child! in what cold desert dost thou wander
With want and misery—my gifts to thee?

THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

THE MARCH OF THE NOMADS

(Translated from the German of Herman von Lingg)

The heath lies before me denuded of grass,
And over the steppe flies the snow as I pass,
And eaten with rust are the spears and the swords;
Here my lance will I lift to heaven on high
And call from the north and the south with a cry
The tribes of the East, the wandering hordes.

Ye hunters of wolves where the Ural peaks glow,
Ye herders of flocks in Death's Valley below,
Ye scouts of the desert, a terrible host,
Ye boatmen who hail from the Caspian coast,
Lift up your lances, your lances so bright,
Your banners of conquest unfurl for the fight!

Now muster the horses and break down the tents,
For the northern lights gleam and we must go hence;

We will pass on our way to the zones of the
west,
Our watchword the cry of the bird on the wind,
The sands of the desert are urging behind,
We may not bide here and we never can rest.

We care not like cravens to follow the plow,
We have furrowed the earth with our spears
until now;
A conquering people, a pitiless power,
Like vultures and locusts we come to devour;
In the smoldering ruins where cities once stood
We render to freedom a tribute of blood.

And when we have conquered and garnered our
gain
And the foemen are chanting their dirge for
the slain
We mourn not in sorrow, we wail not in woe,
Nor build we a tomb for the heroes that died,
The snow it will cover, the night it will hide
The sanctified horror of corpses below.

THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

Where flowers were once blooming now eddies
the sand,
The sea is now breaking where once there was
land;
Where then is there rest for the dead ones,
I pray?
They live in the runes and the songs of the
race,
They dwell in the glory of time and of space,
And we are their envoys forever and aye.

DEDANS PARIS

(CLÉMENT MAROT, 1497-1544)

IN Paris there, brave city, where
I wandered once, weighed down with care,
  Until I met, by chance, one day
  A blithe Italian maid so gay
With whom no maiden can compare.

She hath a modest mien and air,
Her truthful eyes are not a snare—
  Whatever others do or say
    In Paris there.

We sealed our friendship sweet and rare
With just one guileless kiss, I swear;
  Her name I never will betray,
  Enough to know that she alway
Is my fast friend, come foul or fair,
    In Paris there.

LET THEM DREAM

(From the German)

I AND the ghost of midnight, side by side,
Stalk up and down these silent streets at will;
How short a time since here men laughed and cried—
One little hour ago—now all is still.
Erewhile joy vanished like a cast-off flower;
The empty goblet lies beside the stream;
Pale sorrow hid away at twilight hour;
The world is tired, so let it, let it dream.

My hate has ceased, my wrath has taken flight,
As when at night the storm-clouds break awhile,
The peaceful moon looks down with tender light
And gilds the withered roses with her smile.
I walk these silent streets with bated breath,
I hold communion with myself; it seems
My soul would almost search the realm of death
To solve the mystery of human dreams.

My shadow trails behind me like a thief—
  Before the gloomy prison bars I stand—
Thy faithful son, in bitter, bitter grief,
  Atones his love for thee, O Fatherland!
He sleeps and dreams—what chains can bind
      him now?
  Dreams of a hamlet by the wooded stream;
Dreams that the victor's crown is on his brow;
  O God of Justice, let the captive dream!

Before me towers the lofty castle keep;
  Between the purple curtains I can see
The startled Cæsar clutch his sword in sleep
  And shudder as he dreams of treachery.
He mutters to himself, and shrinks with fright;
  His pallid face is plowed with many a seam;
A thousand steeds are saddled for his flight;
  O God of Vengeance, let the despot dream!

The cottage by the brook, how small it seems;
  Yet want and worth together share one bed.
The Lord will let his vassal dream his dreams—
  Such fancies serve to calm his waking dread.
When slumber's silken meshes are unfurled
  He sees his ample cornfields' golden gleam,

THE WOOING OF THE ROSE

His narrow homestead widens to a world;
O God of Mercy, let the poor man dream!

In yonder house, upon a bench of stone,
A blessing will I crave and rest from care;
I love thee well, my child, though not alone—
My heart with Freedom you must ever share.
You dream of turtle-doves and butterflies,
While I can only hear the eagle's scream;
Can only see my war-steed's flashing eyes;
O God, I pray thee, let my darling dream!

O stars, that from the clouds like fortune break!
O night, that folds us in thy soft embrace!
Let not the sleeping world too soon awake,
To gaze upon my grief-disfigured face.
Not yet can baffled Liberty afford
To light her camp-fires by the day's broad beam,
Lest tyranny again should whet her sword;
O God of Slumber, let the sleepers dream!

FROM THE BARRICADES

(After Heine)

POETS, sleep and dream no more,
Wake to deeds of high emprise,
Strike the chords of lute and lyre
Till they fill the soul with fire,
Like the Marseillaise of yore.

Pipe no more in accents weak
To your lady's love lit eyes;
A la bayonet, the word,
On the ramparts it is heard,
Let the swords and daggers speak!

Suffer not your lute to trill
Softly in idyllic sighs;
Be a trumpet in its call,
Be a cannon charged with ball
Peal and thunder, roar and kill.

Peal and roar as days go by,
Till the last oppressor dies;
And until the world is free,
Let your song from henceforth be
One exultant battle cry.

CHILDE HAROLD

(From the German of Heine)

NOW black and stark, a stately bark
  Bears calmly on with canvas spread;
In silence all, around a pall,
  The watchers watch beside the dead.

A poet dies, and calm he lies,
  His face uncovered to the sight;
His eyes of blue cerulean hue
  Fixed on the far celestial light.

From out the deep, tones swell and sweep,
  Such as the morbid mermaids make;
With ceaseless surge, like solemn dirge,
  Against the bark the billows break.

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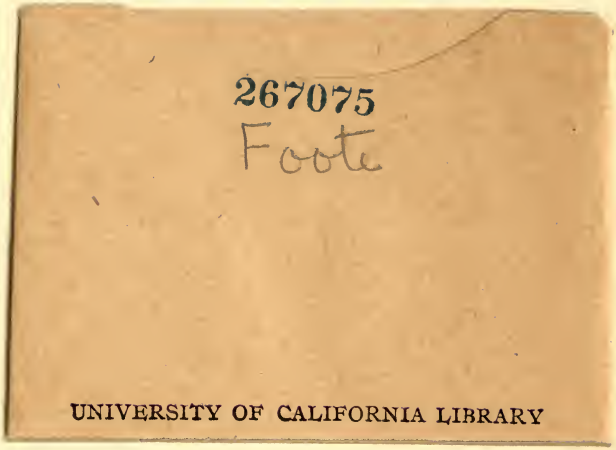
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